

Innovative Charity Relies on WhatsUp Gold to Monitor its Critical Hardware and Inter-site Connections through a Period of Rapid Growth

Organisation:

The Hollybank Trust

Industry:

Charity for children and adults with profound physical disabilities and complex learning needs

Business Challenge:

Due to a rapidly expanding network, the charity required a real-time solution to monitor business critical hardware and inter-site connections

Outcome:

The Hollybank Trust chose WhatsUp Gold for around-the-clock monitoring of its applications, servers, devices, and network resources.

The Hollybank Trust is a highly commendable charity that cares for children and adults with profound and multiple physical disabilities, which are often coupled with severe learning disabilities. Occupying several sites across the county of West Yorkshire, England, that act as both a school and a home for children, the Trust is increasingly being called upon to cater for the unique needs of adults in homes within the community. It achieves this by providing help with supported housing, self-care, self-advocacy and - through pioneering technology - giving people the opportunity to do things for themselves.

The Trust is expanding rapidly in terms of its physical sites, and subsequently its number of users and networked hardware. With sites spread across West Yorkshire - Barnsley, Halifax, Holmfirth, Mirfield and South Kirkby - the Trust now has over 500 employees that rely heavily upon its infrastructure.

Despite the organisation's growth, the Trust currently employs only two full-time Information Services staff, based at its main site in Mirfield. Before installing WhatsUp Gold Premium edition, the Trust didn't really have a network solution in place.

"We needed to respond to problems with business critical hardware and inter-site connections more quickly and proactively," explained Brian Boullier PhD, Head of Information, Communications & Assistive Technology. "Whilst our ADSL-mediated WAN is proving to be fairly resilient, using What's Up Gold has significantly improved our ability to identify problems and respond to them more swiftly."

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- Brian Boullier PhD,
Head of Information,
Communications & Assistive Technology,
Hollybank Trust

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The Trust's IT department now routinely uses WhatsUp Gold to monitor connection and hardware availability. A 'live' topographical map of its WAN is constantly displayed in the Information Services office on a wide screen monitor, to ensure that the status of the networked devices is visible to all.

"WhatsUp Gold enables us to monitor the availability of VPN connections and Internet availability back to our main site in real time, as well as monitor remote business-critical hardware," explained Boullier. "Alerts are then sent to our Information Services staff if key equipment and connections become unavailable, sometimes identifying potential problems before our users are even aware of them."

The constant reassurance that its inter-site connections and hardware are working correctly is a major benefit to the IT department. The constantly updated visual representation of its 'live' wide-area network has also enabled its staff to respond proactively to incidents when they occur and work more efficiently.

"Identifying problems before service users report them has improved our Information Service department's reputation and we are now able to deploy our information services resources more efficiently," said Boullier. "We can organise staff more effectively and also plan our responses about the state of our WAN and availability of business critical equipment, such as data switches and networked laser printers, on the basis of real time information."

WhatsUp Gold provides the core platform for the management of networks, but it is fully scalable to accept a wide-range of plug-ins, including WhatsConnected (for Layer 2/Layer 3 discovery, mapping and visualisation), VoIP Monitor (for precise measurement of a converged network's ability to provide the quality of service (QoS) necessary for VoIP) and FlowMonitor (for network performance and utilisation monitoring), all of which help IT managers to gain a wider view of their networks and troubleshoot problems.

"Having recently installed a VoIP system I am keen to investigate the benefits of the relevant plug-in for WhatsUp Gold," concluded Boullier. "We are also investing in a time and attendance system, and I hope to monitor the availability of card readers across all our sites using WhatsUp Gold Premium."

The WhatsUp Gold product family provides networking professionals with more intelligence about and visibility into their networks than ever before. Network management professionals want simplicity and need rapid results. With over 25 major new features, and over 100 new sub-features, WhatsUp Gold v14.0 directly addresses these needs by delivering decreased deployment time and increased performance and productivity.

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