



The Power of Being There®

Case Study

Northern Health gives its IT department a clean bill of health



“We knew Avocent would give us a stable and secure remote access solution, but we were especially pleased to utilize it as an ‘all-in-one’ tool.”

Bill McCloskey

Regional Client Support

Manager

Information & Technology

Services

Northern Health

Northern Health is responsible for the delivery of health care across Northern British Columbia (B.C.) including acute care, mental health, long term and extended care, public health, environmental health, addictions, and home and community care. With over 6,000 employees, and a corporate office located in Prince George, B.C., Northern Health serves three health service delivery areas in the Northwest, Northeast and Northern Interior – an area encompassing almost two thirds of B.C.

Lack of remote access proves debilitating

Part of the problem in serving very large geographical areas in Northern B.C. is that the population tends to be widely dispersed. So much so, that some of the areas are not easily accessible by car, some can only be reached by ferry or plane and usually there are no on-site IT people. And when you deal in peoples’ health, if there is an IT problem or a critical server goes down, reaction time is essential to maintaining health services to patients.

Northern Health’s IT department was responsible for more than 100 servers and was using analog KVM (Keyboard, Video, Mouse) switches for local control of their servers. This lack of remote access essentially meant that should a problem arise, Northern Health would suffer critical downtime while one of Northern Health’s IT staff was dispatched to the appropriate server room.

Bill McCloskey is regional client support manager of information and technology services for Northern Health. “We were facing a significant expansion and coupled with our challenges of no remote server access or consolidated tools for control of our servers, we knew now was the time to source a more advanced solution,” he explained. “We required something that would meet our IT department’s need for control and access, and also address budget pressures.”

Avocent solution leads to better IT health

The search for a more advanced KVM technology, which included trade magazines and the advice of vendors and other health authorities, pointed them to Avocent solutions. After reviewing their needs with an Avocent representative, Northern Health selected the Avocent DSR®2010 KVM switch – a DS Series digital-analog appliance that provides connectivity to all major server platforms and serial-based devices. It also allows users to troubleshoot or reboot a server from anywhere in the world.

Complete with click and connect DSView® management software, the DS Series is considered the premier KVM over IP solution for enterprise installations. DS Series appliances provide streamlined CAT 5 cable management, centralized authentication and administration, and unlimited user and server scalability.

With DSView software, users have easy click and connect access and control of all their servers; anytime, anywhere. For Northern Health IT personnel, that means they now have the power to view and manage all connected data centre devices on one screen – regardless of whether the devices are a mix of multi-platform servers, routers and power devices – or located in centres throughout northern B.C.

McCloskey is particularly pleased with the deployment. “The solution was quite compatible with our existing hardware so we were able to use our existing equipment. Plus, we bought our first DSR2010 switch and then continued to purchase additional units. Now we have four DSR2010 appliances and are in total control of many of our critical servers.”

The power of being there

Implementing the new Avocent solution was painless. No enormous configurations were required, nor was there any need for in-depth training. In fact, McCloskey noted that “implementation was easy, everything went very smoothly and the benefits began almost immediately.”

For Northern Health’s IT department, those benefits include remote access and control of their servers leading to quicker response and better control. And that’s just the beginning. “The Avocent solution provides us with the all-in-one-tool we were seeking to securely access and manage our servers remotely and expand our system as needed,” said McCloskey.

While this all-in-one solution was the driving force behind the choice of Avocent, McCloskey admits it was the Avocent trade-in program that essentially clinched the deal. “When Avocent told us we would receive some compensation for our old equipment, and we could use that against the purchase of our new equipment, it was easy to make the decision towards Avocent. Then they told us that our old equipment would be broken down and recycled according to provincial environmental standards. That’s when we knew we were making the right choice,” he said.

A healthy future

Northern Health is extremely pleased with the new Avocent solution. It has helped them provide a very efficient method to remotely access their servers and take total control of their systems.

“The remote access means we don’t have to physically go into the server room to fix problems. We can fix problems from anywhere, anytime – even from home! And that helps to reduce our travel time and makes us more efficient.

“In addition, the Avocent solution is expandable. As the server farm continues to grow and we use up all available capacity, we will likely expand and add additional Avocent solutions. Especially since we can take advantage of the Avocent trade-in program,” McCloskey concluded.

About Avocent

Avocent is the leading worldwide supplier of KVM switching, remote access and serial connectivity solutions that provide IT managers with access and control of multiple servers and network data centre devices. Branded products include switching, extension, intelligent platform management interface (IPMI), wireless, mobile and video display solutions. Avocent KVM solutions are distributed by the world’s largest server manufacturers and installed in Fortune 100 companies around the world.

Headquartered in Huntsville, Alabama, Avocent has sales, operations and R&D centres worldwide. Visit www.avocent.ca for more information about Avocent products.

Avocent Canada

Toll-free Tel: 1.877.992.9239

E-mail: mail@avocent.ca



Avocent DSR switching solutions offer a flexible, scalable design that works with existing network infrastructures.