



The Power of Being There®



Case Study

Symcor banks on Avocent for IT success

"I knew our new Avocent solution would save us time and money and deliver a return on investment. I just never thought it would happen this fast!"

Misana Bannister

Intermediate Technical

Systems Analyst

Symcor Inc.

Symcor Inc. is a leading North American provider of business process outsourcing services for the financial services industry – providing excellence in cheque processing, payment processing, statement production and document management services. With offices located in Canada and the U.S., and approximately 5,000 employees, Symcor provides essential support for North America's largest banking and financial institutions.

IT department needs new technology deposit

As an essential service to major financial institutions, it is important that Symcor maintain efficient management of their data centres. Symcor's 10-member IT staff watch over 450 servers operating a mix of platforms from PC to Sun to UNIX and beyond, located in two separate sites in the Greater Toronto Area and a new site in Montreal, Quebec. It's easy to imagine how serious the situation becomes when a problem arises or a critical server goes down, hundreds of miles away.

Symcor relied on Avocent AutoView® KVM (Keyboard, Video, Mouse) switching systems for local access and control of some servers. While this older technology served its purpose, Symcor required new technology. Technology that could effectively provide their IT department with rapid, remote access and control of their servers – especially in their new Montreal location.

"Once we were commissioning our new Montreal location, we knew that we would have to upgrade to a more advanced KVM over IP switching solution," said Misana Bannister, a Symcor intermediate technical systems analyst. "One that would make more efficient use of our manpower resources, save us time and money associated with travel, and ultimately reduce the 'cable clutter jungle' strangling our server rooms."

Symcor invests in Avocent

Since Symcor had previous proven success with Avocent products, it was hard to persuade management to look at any other vendor for the new technology. Especially since Avocent KVM over IP technology is the market leader in providing products designed to address server access and control issues.

"Initially we did investigate other products to some degree, but since we were pleased with the performance of our previous Avocent products, we knew that upgrading to Avocent

digital solutions was our obvious choice,” Bannister explained.

Symcor ultimately chose the Avocent DSR1010 KVM over IP switching system. Fully complete with click and connect DSView® management software, the DSR® Series is considered a premier KVM over IP solution for enterprise installations.

It provides powerful server and serial device management from anywhere, CAT 5 cable management, centralized authentication and administration, and unlimited user and server scalability.

In addition, with DSView software, users have easy access and control of all their servers; anytime, anywhere. This gives Symcor IT personnel 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 offices hundreds of miles away.

Checks and balances provide total control

While implementation of the new Avocent solution went smoothly, it was the realization of immediate benefits that caused the most stir at Symcor. “The ability to remotely access an important server is invaluable. We now have the ability to enjoy boot level control and get down to the BIOS level. So, if a server goes down, we can immediately access it, reboot and correct the situation – something no other similar competitive product provides,” said Bannister.

Security and flexibility are other beneficial results. The ability to lock out physical console access is a key security feature. The new Avocent solution enabled the Symcor IT department to benefit from the ability to delegate authority and allow remote access to specific users, something they were not able to do in the past.

“Plus, we now have a tremendous amount of flexibility. Previously, all the servers were jumbled together. Now we can instantly specify that the UNIX users have access to just the UNIX systems and so on.

“One look at our new server rooms and it’s easy to see that we no longer have to ‘machete’ our way into the cable jungle. The Avocent DSR solutions with its CAT 5 cabling system has significantly reduced our cable clutter and made it safer to travel into the rooms,” added a smiling Bannister.

Symcor credits Avocent for IT success

While the Symcor IT department is thoroughly pleased with the new Avocent solution, it is Symcor’s financial executives who have a major reason to celebrate – Symcor’s ROI is instantly materializing.

“Now that we don’t have to physically be at a server site, we are saving an immense amount of travel time and downtime and are able to react and respond to situations quickly. This has enabled us to enjoy a significant and visible improvement on how our resources – especially manpower – are utilized. We have definitely met our IT objectives,” said Bannister.

Also, since it is simple to “daisy chain” devices with the Avocent KVM over IP technology, Symcor will be able to easily expand their IT department in the future. Something that Bannister sees as inevitable. “We eventually will have a 100 percent KVM over IP environment, further increased savings and a very happy chief financial officer!”

About Avocent

Avocent is the leading worldwide supplier of KVM switching and 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 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.

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