Case Study

SAINT PAUL REGIONAL WATER SERVICES

Headquartered in the capital city of Minnesota, St. Paul Regional Water Services (SPRWS) provides retail water services to 96,000 commercial and residential accounts representing 450,000 people in St. Paul and neighboring communities. With two locations in St. Paul, the SPRWS relied on manual processes to manage its Windows XP desktops. When manual processes became too much of a drain on IT staff and resources, the SPRWS turned to Prism Suite® from New Boundary Technologies® to automate and streamline desktop management.

Organization:
St. Paul Regional Water Services

Profile:
The primary provider of water services to St. Paul, Minnesota and surrounding communities, St. Paul Regional Water Services serves 450,000 customers.

Situation:
Managing 155 Windows XP desktops with manual processes was inefficient and costly.

Quote:
"Prism Suite is a great software solution that has saved us countless staff hours in the first several months of owning the product. Deployment projects that used to take 20 to 40 hours of staff time can now be completed in just an hour."

– Andy Knuth
Systems Support Specialist

Background:
As the primary source of water services for St. Paul and eight neighboring communities, St. Paul Regional Water Services provides a critical service to its customers. As the organization grew, so did the complexity and scope of its IT operations. Eventually, IT staff became overburdened by the time requirements of managing and maintaining their desktop systems using manual methods.

Environment:
St. Paul Regional Water Services manages 155 Windows XP desktops in its two office locations in St. Paul. In addition to desktop management, the SPRWS IT department also manages a variety of other software applications, including a 24/7 customer service information application.The agency currently has four IT administrators dedicated to desktop management using Prism Suite.

Solution:
Concerned about the amount of staff time and resources needed to manually manage its desktops, St. Paul Regional Water Services decided that automating desktop management was a fast and easy way to drive new efficiencies within the IT department. Their primary concern was finding ways to save time on software installations and customizing application deployment for all of its users and user profiles. After evaluating Prism Suite in a test environment, the SPRWS immediately saw the advantages of Prism Suite and licensed the solution for all 155 of its Windows computers.

Result:
Within a week of purchasing Prism Suite, St. Paul Regional Water Services faced a difficult IT challenge. A DNS issue caused a communication failure between desktop computers and the mainframe housing the agency's customer service information system. SPRWS used Prism Suite to quickly create a configuration package that restored the communication link and resolved the issue. According to Andy Knuth, systems support specialist for St. Paul Regional Water Services, Prism Suite saved more than 20

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staff hours of work that would have been required to manually reconfigure each desktop system. It wasn't long before Prism Suite was saving St. Paul Regional Water Services IT staff even more time.

"We use a Computerized Maintenance Management System that has screens that are displayed as popup messages," said Knuth. "Unfortunately, many of our desktop users had installed the Google Toolbar on their computers, which blocks popup messages. None of the desktops with the Google Toolbar could view the CMMS messages."

To solve the problem, Knuth created a Prism package that automatically removes the Google Toolbar. Leveraging Prism Suite's Smart Update™ automation technology, the IT department set up a Configuration Group to identify computers with the Google Toolbar installed. At regularly scheduled intervals, the Configuration Group automatically removes the toolbar from any computer on which it has been installed, eliminating the issue for IT staff and significantly reducing helpdesk calls concerning the CMMS.

St. Paul Regional Water Services also uses Prism Suite to dramatically speed installation of Windows XP service packs. Needing to deploy Service Pack 3 to all of its Windows XP systems, SPRWS IT administrators leveraged Prism Suite's Wake on LAN feature with the Patch Manager in a two step process to install the service pack during non-working hours in a single deployment to all 155 desktops. According to Knuth, "We were able to resolve

41 vulnerabilities on all of our Windows XP systems with a single deployment that had zero impact on end users and took a fraction of the time it would take to manually install the service pack."

St. Paul Regional Water Services has now taken this one step further, using Prism Suite to automatically install all the software required by new PCs when they bring them online. "By automating the provisioning of new PCs, we are saving countless hours of staff time over manual installations," said Knuth. "In fact, all our administrators need to do now is put new systems on the network and Prism Suite automatically installs the applications required by all our users."