



Cal State University San Marcos

CSUSM REDUCES APPLICATION DEPLOYMENT TIME FROM WEEKS TO HOURS USING SVS

THE ALTIRIS® SOLUTION:
Altiris® Software Virtualization Solution™

We rolled out SVS to help improve application reliability, drive down application support costs and better serve the constantly evolving software requirements of our faculty and students.

—BILL WASHBURN

Operations Systems Analyst

ABOUT CSUSM

Founded in 1989, California State University San Marcos opened its doors to students in the fall of 1990. It is the first of a new generation of Cal State Universities. More than 7,300 students currently attend the 304-acre campus, located in the foothills of northern San Diego County just a short distance from some of Southern California's best beaches and an hour from the U.S.-Mexico Border. Cal State San Marcos is fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.
(www.csusm.edu)

THE CHALLENGE

- > Provide high quality of service to end users without increasing costs or headcount
- > Small desktop support team made it difficult to quickly deploy and image computers widely distributed across campus
- > Faculty and students sometimes need multiple versions of an app on same machine, wanted to eliminate application conflicts

THE BUSINESS VALUES

- > SVS increased efficiency of application deployment and management, which allows CSUSM to keep costs and headcount at a minimum
- > SVS reduced application deployment time from weeks to hours for a statistical application used on 800 lab machines
- > SVS eliminated application conflicts and allows students and faculty to use multiple versions of the same application on the same machine

Since California State University San Marcos opened its doors in 1990, the number of computers used by the school has grown significantly from 250 to more than 2,500 computers. However, during that same period of time the university's lab desktop support team has grown by just one person. Keeping up with computers and providing the level of service needed has been challenging to say the least.

Bill Washburn, operations systems analyst at CSUSM, needed to find a better way to support and manage desktops without increasing costs or headcount. After seeing Software Virtualization Solution (SVS) for the first time at ManageFusion Las Vegas in 2005, Washburn thought this just might be the answer.

SVS IMPLEMENTATION IS A SUCCESS

Following the presentation, Washburn downloaded the beta version of SVS and began testing it extensively. After successfully testing SVS for a few months, Washburn implemented the new solution. "We rolled out SVS to help improve application reliability, drive down application support costs and better serve the constantly evolving software requirements of our faculty and students," Washburn said.

The first project Washburn decided to undertake with SVS was the deployment of SPSS, a statistical analysis application used on about 800 lab machines. Since CSUSM doesn't receive the SPSS license keys until after the start of Fall semester each year, Washburn would have to work nights and weekends updating the machines to keep from disrupting classes during the day. The process would take up to 2 months to complete. Washburn hoped that updating the applications using SVS rather than having to re-image each machine would save time

and avoid having to work during off hours.

SVS proved to be a huge time saver on this first project. Washburn explained, "Using SVS, I was able to install the updated version of SPSS with the new license keys on all 800 machines in probably two hours tops. Before we implemented SVS, it would have taken several weeks to reclone all the labs with the updated license keys. Instead, I did all the work sitting at my desk."

REDUCED APPLICATION DEPLOYMENT FROM DAYS TO MINUTES

SVS is also helping Washburn improve service to his end users. He can now deploy applications out to students or faculty in minutes without interfering with classes or students. In the past, it could take between 10 and 15 days to process a request for new software. Washburn can now package an application and deploy it in the time it used to take him to image one computer. "We operate on a tight budget and have limited resources to address application management. SVS allows us to immediately fill application requests and be comfortable that we won't break existing apps or create new problems," Washburn said.

APPLICATION CONFLICTS ELIMINATED

Another benefit CSUSM has seen from its implementation of SVS is significantly reduced application conflicts. The school has more than 100 different applications and so there is bound to be conflicts. SVS eliminates those conflicts, allowing students and faculty to run normally incompatible applications concurrently.

SVS has also allowed Washburn to better cater to the wants and needs of the faculty. Each professor has his or her own preference for which applications they need running on their machines. "In the past, we had a big problem trying to run multiple versions of the same application on the same machine, which is a common need in our classrooms. Not any more. SVS allows us to run multiple versions on those same machines without any issues."

COMPLIANCE WITH INTERNAL POLICIES

In the near future, Washburn also expects that SVS will make it easier to comply with internal software management policies. One of the difficulties of managing software in an academic environment is making sure that only the applications being used for classes currently being taught are installed on lab machines. With SVS, Washburn can turn applications on and off and not have to worry about managing or creating multiple images. SVS provides the flexibility to activate or deactivate applications anytime with the click of a button.

Washburn is excited about using SVS going forward and would recommend it to other organizations looking to simplify application management. "It's almost too easy and I'm not used to that," Washburn said. "You don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure it out."