

NTUC Income

SINGAPORE'S LARGEST LIFE AND GENERAL INSURER IMPROVES NETWORK SECURITY AND STABILITY WITH ALTIRIS® CLIENT MANAGEMENT SUITE™

THE ALTIRIS® SOLUTION:

Altiris® Client Management Suite™ Level 1

ABOUT NTUC INCOME

Formed in 1970 as a cooperative insurance society and with only \$1.2 million in capital, NTUC Income has grown to \$16 billion in assets with more than 1.8 million policy holders. NTUC Income has long maintained a policy of utilising IT to enhance business operations. In fact, in 1980 the company became the first insurer in Singapore to install a mainframe computer and in 1995, the first to launch an Internet Web site. One of NTUC Income's business goals is to "constantly develop our IT capability with the aim of improving our efficiency and consequently, raising the level of service to our policyholder."

THE CHALLENGE

- > Reduce the time and personnel resources required for application and OS patch rollouts
- > Achieve a more robust IT infrastructure with on-time patching of application and OS exploits
- > Gain a complete view of hardware and software assets throughout the enterprise

THE BUSINESS VALUES

- > Rollout of application and OS patches achieved in one-to-two days as opposed to two months
- > Enhanced hardware upgrade and replacement forecasting and planning capabilities
- > Accurate and up-to-date software licence usage reporting
- > Improved client device security from external virus and hacking threats

COMBATING THE EXPLOIT THREAT

With 12 branch locations throughout Singapore and in excess of 1,400 client devices, NTUC Income was faced with constant challenges in maintaining a secure and stable IT infrastructure. Key among those was it was taking up to two months to rollout OS and application patches.

According to the company's Chief Information Officer, Mr. James Kang, the requirement to attend physically to each device was resulting in severe strain on IT support resources at personnel, time and finance levels. "There is an increasing frequency in operating system and application exploits being released into the wild," he said. "What we needed was a solution that would enable us to implement patches, along with application upgrades and installations, almost immediately."

Following a thorough evaluation process, NTUC Income implemented Altiris® Client Management Suite™ (CMS) in early 2005 to address the immediate need for improved software and OS management as well as affording distinct benefits in software and hardware asset management.

SEAMLESS SOFTWARE UPGRADES

Underpinning the broad success of Altiris CMS within NTUC Income is the organisation's new-found ability to affect an enterprise-wide application rollout or upgrade within days rather than months. According to Mr Kang, manual upgrades of the company's 1,800 PCs used to require visits from IT support staff out to each of the insurer's 12 branches. The same amount of work can now be done in just two days by a single staff member.

"All that is required now is one of the support team members to use the Altiris console to schedule the upgrade or installation then, once it's been done, check the report that is automatically generated to verify the installation's success status," Mr Kang

explained. "There's no travelling time – or costs – incurred, and no time wasted by the IT staff while waiting around for the installation to complete."

Importantly, the process of rolling out new applications and security patches is, in many cases, being done while the users are actually using their workstations. "This is a tremendous benefit to the business," Mr Kang stated. "While there may be some slowing down of the system while the patch is being installed, it's absolutely nothing in comparison to what it used to be, which was total disruption."

HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE ASSET MANAGEMENT

At an IT planning level, Altiris CMS is providing NTUC Income with the ability to more accurately forecast and plan its hardware upgrade and replacement program. This is being achieved by means of the comprehensive hardware inventory that is generated by Altiris CMS.

Using the Altiris CMS-generated hardware report, NTUC Income IT staff members can see almost at a glance the number of PCs that are reaching end-of-life as well as determine, prior to the implementation of new software, which PCs may require upgrades to memory. This is all valuable information and serves to help NTUC Income maintain optimum performance across its broad client population automatically.

Incorporating CMS Level 1's Application Metering and Application Monitoring, the new solution features a client-based software agent that reports back on all the software installed on each PC. This data is automatically collected at the server, providing NTUC Income IT staff with a data source that is cross-referenced with current software licence records.

"We take software licence compliance extremely seriously," Mr Kang said. "Altiris CMS ensures that we are able to do a complete and exhaustive audit of our software licences virtually with no effort at all."

In commenting on the procedures previously used to track software licence usage across the network, Mr Kang stated quite frankly: "It just wasn't possible! We weren't able to verify that the number of software licences purchased tallied with the number of licences installed. The result being that we could just as easily be overpaying for licences as having too few licences and be in breach of our licence agreements."

PROTECTING THE GOOD NAME OF THE BUSINESS

Mr Kang is aware of the potential damage to business reputation when news comes forward about major enterprise networks being affected by viruses or severe hacks; and in the financial industry, it's even more of a media-attracting event. With Altiris CMS and the rapid deployment of security patches, NTUC Income is in a strong position to never be at the centre of such happenings.



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REDUCED LOAD ON IT SUPPORT

Prior to the introduction of Altiris CMS, the NTUC IT support team of six spent approximately 20 per cent of its time dealing with software upgrades and installations, and operating system patches. Now, only one person is required to perform these tasks and in much less time than before.

Of particular note is that hand-in-hand with the reduced load on IT support for installations and upgrades is a dramatic increase

in the stability and security of the NTUC Income client device population. Mr Kang explained: “As soon as an operating system or application vulnerability is discovered, we’re now able to push the patch out across the network immediately.”

This is also where the Altiris CMS asset management capabilities play a significant value-added role. With the IT support team now having access to a complete and accurate operating system and application profile for each client device, patches can be pushed out to every one of the devices running the exploited software.

“At NTUC Income, we have a primary focus on exploiting the enormous potential of IT,” Mr Kang said. “Altiris Client Management Suite essentially gives us the means by which we can extend that exploitation even further.”

ABOUT ALTIRIS

Altiris, Inc. offers a full line of Web-enabled solutions that empower organizations to easily manage desktops, notebooks, handhelds and Windows, Linux and UNIX servers throughout the IT lifecycle. Altiris provides fully integrated, complete systems management solutions for client and mobile, server, and asset management. Altiris’ vision is to automate, simplify, and reduce the cost and complexity of IT lifecycle management with a rapid return on investment. For more information, visit www.altiris.com.



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