

Baylor College of Medicine

Minimizing Security Threats and Speeding up Software Delivery with Altiris Solutions



Facing increasing risks from security threats, Baylor College of Medicine (BCM) needed to find a faster way to make sure all its desktops and servers were up-to-date with their security patches. In 2003 it chose Altiris Client and Server Management Suites to ensure that its machines had the proper anti-virus protection and were up to date with standard operating system and Microsoft Office Suite security patches. Adding the Altiris Deployment Solution, BCM installs software on its user machines 50 times faster than it could previously. BCM can also keep its systems compliant with security standards using Altiris solutions, and Altiris managed systems have not experienced a significant virus outbreak in five years.

ORGANIZATION PROFILE

Baylor College of Medicine (BCM, www.bcm.edu) in Houston, the only private medical school in the Greater Southwest, is recognized as a premiere academic health science center and is known for excellence in education, research, and patient care. Located in the Texas Medical Center, with 8,075 employees, BCM has affiliations with eight teaching hospitals, each known for medical excellence.

INDUSTRY

Healthcare

SOLUTION

Endpoint Management

Seeking Streamlined Patch Inventory and Management

Baylor College of Medicine (BCM) is one of the world's leading centers for biomedical research and clinical care. Situated within the Texas Medical Center, a 1,000-acre complex that is the largest medical center in the world, BCM is frequently rated as one of the top medical schools in the nation. BCM is embarking on building a new Clinic and Hospital, which will be the first facility in the Texas Medical Center to be designed from the ground up to deliver personalized medicine.

As technology becomes more critical to healthcare and research, BCM had an increasing need to minimize its exposure to threats from malicious code. This has become Lawrence Mayran's job as the lead for IT security services at BCM, which means that he provides security to more than 100 school departments.

In the early 2000's, nasty worms and viruses were circulating, such as the ILOVEYOU worm and the SQL Slammer worm. "Like many organizations we got hit pretty hard and had to spend significant human and financial resources disinfecting and rebuilding machines and trying to recover from all the damage from these attacks," says Mayran. "We had to find a way to quickly see what machines needed patching out of the 7,000 machines and 600 servers here, so we looked for a way to streamline patch management and inventory"

Enhanced Protection Against Security Threats

BCM hired a consultant and evaluated more than 50 desktop and server management solutions and chose Altiris™ Client and Server Management Suites. "We liked the fact that Altiris client and server management solutions support the range of platforms that we have here at Baylor," says Mayran. BCM has been using Altiris for approximately five years to enhance security by increasing endpoint compliance with security policies and updates.

"I feel that Altiris really listens to its customers."

Lawrence Mayran

Ph.D., Lead IT Security Services

Baylor College of Medicine

Altiris helps medical college install software more than 50 times faster than it could before.

For the past two years, the school has used its Altiris Software Delivery Solution and Altiris Deployment Solution to deliver software to its widespread user group. Mayran has used this software to deploy and manage Microsoft Office and Adobe Acrobat; laptop encryption programs such as Pointsec; Citrix application delivery software; and McKesson patient information systems.

Mayran and his team are also using their Altiris solutions to help manage and update operating systems for BCM's IBM BladeCenter system and other IBM servers running AIX, VMware, Microsoft Windows Server 2000, and Microsoft Windows Server 2003 and Windows 2008. The desktop platforms they're administering include Microsoft Windows XP, Microsoft Windows Vista, and Mac OS and Windows 2000. "We are able to ensure patch compliance and application inventory which helps with licensure, and hardware inventory which helps with asset management planning and budgeting," says Mayran. "We also monitor 'questionable software' whereby if a system is shown to have unapproved software through the Altiris Software Reports, we remove that software."

Software Delivery 50 Times Faster

BCM's Altiris managed systems have not had a significant virus outbreak in since the implementation of Altiris Solutions. Using Altiris solutions, Mayran and team have been able to take departments that are 75 to 85 percent compliant with security patches and make them compliant, enhancing protection from security threats.

When Microsoft released Windows XP Service Pack 3 (SP3)—a critical update that closed numerous security gaps—Mayran was able to install the software at the rate of a hundred machines per hour with Altiris Deployment Solution. He estimates that without Altiris, it would have taken 30 minutes per machine to manually install SP3—completing two machines in an hour. Altiris Deployment Solution enabled his team to get the job done more than 50 times faster.

Mayran also gets value from the Altiris Knowledgebase at kb.altiris.com. It provides answers to most technical questions about using Altiris solutions to automate and centralize systems management. For Mayran, it's a great way to get answers fast. "One of our users called up with a problem installing the DAgent for Vista," say Mayran. "There's a solution for that in the Altiris knowledgebase so we were able to solve the problem right away."

Mayran is also pleased that Altiris technical support gives him personalized attention whenever he calls with a question. And whenever he can, he attends ManageFusion, a systems management user conference sponsored by companies such as Altiris, Dell Inc., Intel Corporation, and HP, to keep up on advances in how to streamline systems management. "There's a lot of knowledge transfer at ManageFusion," says Mayran. "It's a good place to get many valuable insights."

This past year Mayran was invited to become part of the Customer Advisory Board which enables him to meet with the key executives of Altiris and Symantec and contribute to the future direction of the Altiris products. "I feel that Altiris really listens to its customers on so many levels," he says. "Whether I'm talking on the phone to technical support or talking with top executives, I feel that my input is valued."

SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

Key Challenges

- Enhance ability to protect against security threats
- Streamline software delivery to 7,000 desktops, 600 servers
- Reduce IT overhead

Solution

Altiris centralized management streamlining patching, security compliance, and software deployment

Symantec Products

- Altiris™ Client Management Suite
- Altiris Server Management Suite

Technology Environment

- Applications: Microsoft Office and Adobe Acrobat; laptop encryption programs such as Pointsec; Citrix application delivery software; McKesson patient information systems.
- Servers: IBM servers running IBM AIX (1), VMware ESX (86), Microsoft Windows Server 2000 (22) and 2003 (299), and Windows Server 2008 (1)
- Desktop Platforms: Microsoft Windows XP, Microsoft Windows Vista, Mac O/S, Microsoft Windows 2000

Business Results

- No significant security disruptions since implementation of Altiris Solutions
- 50-fold faster installation of software, with ability to update hundreds of machines per hour
- Ability to save hours when troubleshooting a problem with documentation from Altiris knowledgebase
- Altiris promotes systems compliance across user base

“We liked the fact that Altiris client and server management solutions support the range of platforms that we have here at Baylor.”

Lawrence Mayran

Ph.D., Lead IT Security Services
Baylor College of Medicine