University of Pittsburg

Ivanti Takes Patching from a Full-Time Job to an Hour a Week

PROFILE

FIS Technical Services at the University of Pittsburgh supports the technical needs of 800 university employees, and has been recognized as #1 in higher education for its customer service.

INDUSTRY

Education

NETWORK

- 800 Windows PCs
- 100-200 Windows servers
- 150 printers
- 150 mobile devices
- 70 buildings

SOLUTION

- Ivanti Patch for Microsoft System Center™

KEY BENEFITS

- Technical Services manages all Microsoft and non-Microsoft updates in one place.
- Updating all applications takes about an hour each week – no matter how many applications need patching. Before, it was nearly a full-time job.
- Faster, easier patching means updates are rolled out sooner.
- The team can now focus on other demands, such as maintaining its award-winning customer service and implementing new technologies.

Overview

At the University of Pittsburgh, the Financial Information Systems (FIS) department supports the business and financial areas of the university and more, including the CFO's office, payroll, purchasing, general accounting, housing, food services, parking and transportation. Within FIS, the Technical Services team supports the IT needs of more than 800 university employees, providing application development, client and server computing, and customer support for anything tech related. The team is also responsible for bringing cutting-edge technologies and the latest computer hardware and software to keep the department running efficiently and securely.

For its customer service, the FIS Technical Services team was named as part of the prestigious HDI CSAT Elite 50, a ranking that recognizes outstanding technical service and support centers across the country. HDI ranked FIS Technical Services fifth out of 800 organizations and first in higher education.

Challenge: Security Depends on Patch Compliance

As a financial department, FIS takes information security seriously. Technical Services stays on top of patches across several hundred applications throughout the department. For the most frequently used applications, updates come out at least every month, if not every week.

Technical Services manages all its patch updates centrally via Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager (SCCM). But for some of its most widely used applications—non-Microsoft software such as Adobe, Java, Apple, Google and Mozilla—the team previously had to detect, build and test patches manually before deploying them with SCCM.

"For non-Microsoft applications, we had to build out each collection and advertisement one at a time," said Anthony Digregorio, Manager of Client Computing, FIS Technical Services. "We tested and pushed out each one individually. For just three to five applications, we could easily log up to 10 hours a week. Across them all, it was almost a full-time job."

Solution: Automating Third-Party Updates in SCCM

When the team searched for a simpler way to push out third-party updates, Ivanti emerged as one of the few vendors capable of doing so. Ivanti Patch for Microsoft System Center™ received the highest industry reviews and peer ratings.

"We chose Ivanti Patch for Microsoft System Center because it seemed the best at what it does," Digregorio said. "We could bring third-party applications into our existing SCCM infrastructure for a relatively low cost. Now we can leverage our investment in SCCM to automate the patch process for all our applications."

Ivanti Patch for Microsoft System Center requires no application to install or agent to deploy. Because it simply works within SCCM, the team needed just a couple of days to get it up and running.

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From Detection to Deployment

Ivanti Patch for Microsoft System Center provides both patch detection and deployment. A catalog delivers up-to-date information from multiple vendors in a single file that is tested, packaged and ready for deployment.

Before, Technical Services had to visit each vendor's website to learn about and download patches. Ivanti Patch for Microsoft System Center keeps Technical Services updated on all application updates in one place with weekly emails. With one click, they can import the latest catalog, either all at once or by selecting specific applications.

With all patch management in one place, Technical Services can also more easily perform compliance reporting to ensure that applications are current with the latest updates.

Newfound Time to Focus on Customers, Technology

Automating third-party applications with Ivanti Patch for Microsoft System Center has freed the team from what seemed like nonstop patching, at times requiring them to work evenings or weekends.

"We've always been dedicated to staying protected. Now, it just doesn't take nearly as much time to stay protected," said Rick McIver, Senior Systems Administrator, FIS Technical Services. "Updating all applications takes about an hour each week—no matter how many applications need patching—instead of being nearly a full-time job."

Faster, easier patching means updates are rolled out sooner. With less time on updates, the team can now focus on other demands, such as maintaining its award-winning customer service and implementing new technologies.

"If you're already using SCCM and need a more efficient way to deploy third-party updates, I would take a look at Ivanti," Digregorio said.

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