

U.S. Army Helicopters Project Office

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SUCCESS STORY

U.S. Army Project Office relies on Novell® solutions for a high level of security and protection against viruses and hackers.

OVERVIEW

The Utility Helicopters Project Management Office (UH PMO) procures and sustains helicopters for the United States Army. The UH PMO manages a fleet of more than 1500 Sikorsky UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters to provide the greatest capability, reliability and safety to U.S. soldiers.

CHALLENGE

The UH PMO consists of 130 local users and approximately 120 remote users. With its previous e-mail system, the office experienced significant downtime, often for half a day, as well as substantial delays in routing mail. UH PMO began looking for a reliable e-mail solution that would provide secure remote access, as well as protection against viruses and hackers.

The UH PMO also wanted to update its manual process for application distribution. Walking around to 130 machines to manually install each new application required three to four days with a three-person IT staff. With constrained budgets, the UH PMO needed to solve its IT challenges at a reasonable price.

SOLUTION

The UH PMO chose a combination of Novell NetWare® 6, Novell eDirectory®, Novell Portal Services, Novell BorderManager®, Novell eGuide, Novell GroupWise® 6.5, and Novell ZENworks® to create a secure, stable and cost-effective environment.

“As part of the U.S. Army, we are always a target of hackers so security is paramount,” said Kevin Johnston, director of IT for the UH PMO.

“Novell products are reliable and secure. More than 95 percent of the patches and security alerts we receive from the Army don’t even apply to Novell products.”

To address the UH PMO’s security concerns, GroupWise 6.5 provides a high level of security and protection against viruses and hackers; even administrators cannot read everyone’s e-mail. GroupWise 6.5 also requires minimal administration—one member of the IT staff spends 5-10 percent of his time managing the creation and maintenance of all network accounts.

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—Kevin Johnston,
Director of IT,
U.S. Army Utility
Helicopters Project
Management Office

Novell.



"E-mail is the number-one productivity tool in our office and our most critical application," said Johnston. "GroupWise 6.5 has been completely immune to recent e-mail viruses and the downtime is so minimal we're not required to keep metrics on it. The new spam controls are also effectively reducing the clutter in our users' mailboxes."

Because GroupWise is capable of storing vast amounts of e-mail efficiently and securely, users aren't required to periodically delete mail. GroupWise also offers document management services, which enables the organization to manage more than 11,000 shared documents.

One of the key requirements for a new e-mail application was the ability to provide secure access from BlackBerry* handheld devices. Using GroupWise 6.5, BlackBerry users can wirelessly receive and send e-mail at any time, allowing them to communicate easily and securely without having to carry a laptop.

Using Novell Portal Services, the UH PMO created a portal to offer remote access to e-mail, files and their Intranet. Novell BorderManager acts as the master firewall and Novell eDirectory provides a single database of user information to authenticate user access to the portal.

"Novell eDirectory provides not only our user authentication database, but our personnel database as well," said Fred McMullen, network engineer for UH PMO. "We are collapsing nearly 15 databases into one directory and making this information available in Novell eGuide for easy access."

Novell ZENworks has completely automated application distribution, reducing the time to roll out applications from three to four days to a few hours. The IT staff no longer has to stop doing other work to roll out applications and can spend more time on other development projects.

ZENworks has also significantly reduced the volume and duration of helpdesk calls, as well as the need to hire additional helpdesk staff. Using remote control, a helpdesk staff of 1.5 people supports 250 users from a central location, eliminating the need to go to other buildings. After 20 minutes of troubleshooting, a helpdesk employee will simply remotely re-image a machine in 10-15 minutes.

RESULTS

The UH PMO uses its portal to provide secure remote access to its 250 employees so they can be productive outside the office. GroupWise 6.5 provides the UH PMO a high level of reliability and security, along with unlimited e-mail storage and remote access at any time, from any location. Novell ZENWorks has reduced the time to distribute applications by 90 percent, and has eliminated the need to hire additional IT staff.

"We're in the business of procuring and sustaining helicopters, not the IT business," said Fred McMullen, network engineer for UH PMO. "With Novell, we can do more without increasing our IT staff and while maintaining a relatively flat IT budget."

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1 888 321 4272 US/Canada
1 801 861 4272 Worldwide
1 801 861 8473 Facsimile

Novell, Inc.
1800 South Novell Place
Provo, Utah 84606 USA

www.novell.com