

DoubleVision Pro Turns Downtime Into Uptime at Allstream, Inc.

"Before we decided on DoubleVision Pro, resolving some client issues could take days. We now settle most trouble tickets in a fraction of that time. This is a big advantage when considering our only alternative could be jumping on a plane and traveling a thousand miles."

-Ken Bell, Senior Business Analyst - Desktop Support

As corporate networks increase in importance, network managers are under growing pressure to maintain optimum performance around the clock. Some of the best administrative solutions call for remote network management tactics by call center/help desk personnel. Globally, companies like Allstream, Inc., are equipping IT departments with remote access products that enable network administrators to move from a reactionary mode of responding to requests and trouble tickets, to proactive initiatives that efficiently plan and manage network services.

To achieve acceptable levels of operational excellence, Ken Bell, senior business analyst, desktop support at Allstream, Inc., believes that network administrators need help desk tools with advanced features of remote access and security. Without remote access capabilities, help desks' only option may be passing along problems to repair persons. While the hands-on solution is likely to fix the problem, its high cost may be an avoidable expense. "Every day, our help desks face the dilemma of figuring out what went wrong versus keeping users happy," says Bell. "Our users expect us to quickly resolve problems. Users want and expect fast service. We found that remote access technology allows our help desk staffers to quickly return users to productivity."

Desktop Enterprise Administration

Desktop enterprise administration at Allstream, Inc. originates at its centralized help desk in Toronto, Ontario. Calls to the center may be handled there or rerouted to a distributed network of regional technicians located in Calgary and Edmonton, Alberta; Montreal, Quebec; Ottawa, Ontario; and Vancouver, British Columbia.

As the network grew in size, Allstream, Inc. needed more control over its costs associated with performing an enterprise-wide deployment of applications. Originally, it adopted Microsoft's Systems Management Server (SMS) to perform a variety of Windows 2000 deployment tasks, collecting planning details, preparing computers, deploying Windows 2000, and monitoring the deployment process. However, this solution proved costly and less flexible than what Allstream needed to maintain its acceptable levels of operational excellence.

The Evaluation Process

Before any software enters the enterprise, Allstream, Inc. ensures it's compatible. "When we began our software compatibility evaluations, I had a good idea of which remote access features and functionality we needed, but they weren't available in any off-the-shelf product," says Bell. "We first looked at an Open Source version, and very shortly thereafter, I determined that it would solve many of our remote administration issues. However, Tridia's commitment to making our version of DoubleVision® Pro (formerly known as TridiaVNC Pro) fit Allstream, Inc.'s infrastructure like a glove was the most important determining factor."

Business Profile

Allstream, Inc.
www.allstream.com
Toronto, Ontario

Industry: Telecommunications
Employees: 4,500

About Allstream, Inc. Corporation

Allstream, Inc. is the country's largest telecommunications provider. Its principal activities are the development and construction of telecommunications networks.

Allstream, Inc. has more than 18,700 route kilometers of local and long haul broadband fiber optic network, world class managed services of data, Internet, voice and IT.

Solution Snapshot

Went Live: August 2000

Primary use: Remote administration and support of enterprise-wide call center

Hardware: IBM NetVistas and ThinkPads

Software: Microsoft Windows 2000 and Novell

Number of Seats: 5,600



Before he recommended an enterprise-wide implementation of DoubleVision Pro, Bell negotiated a number of additional features from Tridia. Some of Tridia's most important custom changes included the addition of network security features, and FTP, MSI, and Windows Installer capabilities. Additional network security was achieved by requiring remote acknowledgment of beep codes before remote access is permitted. A FTP was provided so information could be published on Web servers through a standard FTP client. And, MSI, a specialized software format used with Windows 2000 and XP and Windows Installer capabilities were added to make DoubleVision Pro more compatible with Allstream's enterprise. Bell contends that this version is extremely close to what he had on his "wish" list.

Why Allstream, Inc. Chose DoubleVision Pro

DoubleVision Pro was decided upon because of Tridia's excellent reputation on support, and the product's *sprint* through Allstream, Inc.'s software evaluations. "We are impressed on how compatible DoubleVision Pro is with our enterprise," says Noel Daez, senior business analyst, desktop support at Allstream, Inc. "The software we chose must do what it claims without disrupting the enterprise. DoubleVision excels at remote administration and support capabilities, while remaining enterprise friendly. DoubleVision works great."

Going Live With DoubleVision Pro

Much like a growing number of companies from around the globe, desktop applications have become mission critical at Allstream, Inc. This powerful perspective drove Bell's strategic plan to implement remote connectivity tools like DoubleVision Pro. "When you're supporting an enterprise that is as large and dispersed as ours, it's extremely important that staff be able to "take over" and manage personal computers or file servers from the help desk," says Bell. "Tridia's remote "take over" capabilities makes our life much easier. It's much more efficient for us to "DoubleVision" trouble than it is to dispatch technicians."

Every month, more than 1,500 calls reach Allstream, Inc.'s help desk. Presently, DoubleVision Pro is populated across two thirds of Allstream, Inc.'s enterprise with plans to soon get to 100 percent. "Our technicians are quite happy with DoubleVision Pro," says Bell. "We're not sure exactly why, but since installing DoubleVision Pro, the volume of trouble cases has actually decreased. Perhaps the power to remotely fix problems dissuades users from making unnecessary demands on the help desk."

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**—Ken Bell, Senior Business Analyst,
Allstream, Inc.**

Tridia Products

UNIX/Linux support

DoubleVision Pro 2.0

(formerly known as TridiaVNC Pro)

Custom Features: *Microsoft Windows authentication, FTP, MSI support for remote software installation and network file transfers, NTLM, and LDAP*

DoubleVision Pro Benefits and Features

- Turned downtime into uptime
- Virtually eliminated support travel expenses
- Quick and Remote enterprise-wide access to desktops and file servers
- Low-cost, high value support tool that empowers the call center
- Remotely accessible and secure software platform for Allstream developers
- Remote demonstration of software to remote clients
- Live evaluation of software with immediate, expert assistance

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Turning Downtime Into Uptime.™

1000 Cobb Place Blvd.
Bldg. 200, Suite 220
Kennesaw, GA 30144

770-428-5000
800-582-9337
Fax: 770-428-5009

www.tridia.com
sales@tridia.com