

IPSWITCH MONITORS DUTCH HOSPITAL'S NETWORK HEARTBEAT

Case study

With more than 7,500 employees and 1,300 beds, the University Medical Centre Groningen (UMCG) is one of the largest hospitals in The Netherlands and the final point of referral to some 178,000 patients a year in the north of the country – 28,000 of which are emergency admittances. The hospital specialises in top clinical and reference care, such as organ transplants, complex neuro-surgery, neonatology and clinical genetics. It is sometimes called a 'city inside a city' and as such has a philosophy that is unique in Europe.

The hospital's ICT department is spread across three sites and is required to deliver and support the IT infrastructure for patient care, education, research and development from a central, automated and secure information core. Although the department is 150 strong, it needs a trusted tool to alert it of any potentially dangerous network outages.

Since 1978 UMCG has been using a proprietary system to monitor its network, but increasingly found that it couldn't handle the 21st century needs of both medical staff and patients alike. After researching the various solutions on the market, the team turned to Ipswitch's specialist Netherlands distributor, SCOS Automation from Hoofddorp, near Amsterdam; purchasing two copies of Ipswitch's award winning network monitoring tool, WhatsUp Gold to undertake the task across the various sites.

"We particularly wanted a tool to graphically show us a map of our entire network," explains UMCG Coordinator of Operational Services, Hans Koning. "WhatUp Gold was that and more, and completely revolutionised how we were able to monitor our network. A picture tells a thousand words, with the help line staff now easily being able to understand the maps and explain the problem."

UMCG has found the same with the management team, who can now easily understand the IT department's requests by looking at the graphical maps and seeing the problem, thus more readily approving their requests.

More recently it took up the upgrade offer and purchased Ipswitch's new-generation monitoring solution – Ipswitch WhatsUp Professional. Already massively popular with both the Ipswitch community and new customers alike, it features a redesigned and enhanced architecture that delivers both improved ease of use and improved network monitoring. With Ipswitch WhatsUp Professional users can now monitor and manage vital data networks as never before, ensuring optimum availability and performance.

"Ipswitch WhatsUp Professional does everything we need, even monitor the events and system logs," says UMCG IT Professional, Frank Beckers. "We have built in our own menus to escalate issues as needed, which gives everyone involved the ability to follow standard hospital procedures." This means that problems can be rectified quickly and easily without alerting any concern, with Ipswitch WhatsUp Professional both sitting in the back office and able to assist the front office helpdesk.

UMCG now has the graphical Ipswitch WhatsUp Professional running on a huge plasma screen in its control room. "The whole new look and feel of Ipswitch WhatsUp Professional is great and can be accessed by third parties," comments Koning. "The separate polling engine is a big improvement, cleaning up the mapping and subnetting procedures as is the ability to drill down to the problem device from the main screen. The use of a SQL database is also a great improvement."

"Ipswitch WhatsUp Professional has become a very important colleague for us! The medical staff now see a lot less of us, which they appreciate and we are now able to be proactive rather than reactive," added Beckers. "The data queue can be managed much better now, radically reducing the incident calls report."

As networks at mid-sized companies become more complex, it becomes increasingly critical that network and IT managers are able to continuously monitor the status of network devices, security events and service performance levels. However, network management products designed for large enterprises typically overburden medium-sized businesses with complexity and high administrative costs. Ipswitch WhatsUp Professional provides organisations such as UMCG with a comprehensive, easy to implement and easy to use network management solution.

"This has been a highly successful implementation for Ipswitch WhatsUp Professional that had an incredibly quick ROI of only two months," said Ipswitch's European Regional Sales Director, Allan Poot. "Network management is a 24/7 activity for UMCG, yet it has reduced its need for overtime and shift costs by reducing the need for a physical presence."

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