

Background

Located in Kenersville, North Carolina, Deere-Hitachi Construction Machinery produces hydraulic excavators in the United States and Canada. The company manufactures both construction excavators and forestry excavators. Deere-Hitachi, which currently has about 1,000 employees, was formed in 1988 as a joint venture between Deere & Company and Hitachi subsidiary Hitachi Construction Machinery Co.

Case Study | Deere-Hitachi

“Moving to Desktop Authority saved my staff by dramatically increasing our productivity,” said Trent Steele, network administrator, Deere-Hitachi Construction Machinery. “At the same time, Desktop Authority greatly improved the security posture of my company. Many configurations and settings managed by Desktop Authority reduce our enterprise security risk. It has also been a pleasure to work with ScriptLogic. The product has evolved nicely to match my enterprise needs.”

The Challenge: Getting Rid of Hand-Written, Tedious Programming Methods for Managing Desktops

When Trent Steele joined Deere-Hitachi Construction Machinery four years ago, he found an inefficient, under-staffed and overworked IT department in need of direction and change.

With the addition of Steele, the Deere-Hitachi IT department staff is comprised of three employees responsible for managing all 1000 users and 300 company desktops. Steele noticed the desktop management process was highly inefficient as his team spent all of its time checking desktop settings and ensuring the scripts were effective. For example, a user concern over a specific desktop configuration meant significant time at that workstation, and evaluating any necessary changes to the logon scripts to solve the problem.

To Steele, one of Deere-Hitachi’s inefficiencies revolved around the cumbersome process the IT staff used to create logon scripts that dictate corporate IT processes. His staff hand-wrote logon scripts to configure basic user settings including mapping drives, printers and other similar

repetitive tasks. Amazingly, more than 50 different scripts were used each day and the scripts were constantly being tweaked to streamline worker use of the machines. To complicate the issue, every desktop was used by as many as three employees since Deere-Hitachi operates during three separate shifts.

Seemingly simple milestones, such as adding a new employee, drained IT resources further. When a new employee joined the company, the IT staff completed a series of tasks to alter the scripts and ensure that desktop configurations reflected the new user. More complicated IT tasks, such as installing significant software upgrades (Microsoft XP SP2, for example), would loom like insurmountable challenges.

Steele’s staff had no time to think about strategic planning including network upgrades, compliance and security issues – and technology purchases that would ultimately help resolve a myriad of other pressing challenges.

The Solution: Removing the Scripting With Desktop Authority

At a previous job, Trent Steele became familiar with ScriptLogic, a provider of software for the management of Microsoft Windows-based networks. When Steele started at Deere-Hitachi, he knew from past experience that installing ScriptLogic software would instantly improve the department’s productivity. The software could replace hand-written scripting with a point-and-click application that combines logon scripting, security policies and user profile management into a single, intuitive, GUI-based management console.

Deere-Hitachi purchased ScriptLogic’s Desktop Authority to eliminate the need for scripting. As a result, when one of his users’ logs on to a given machine, the configuration for that user is set according to Desktop Authority’s comprehensive set of configuration elements with granular control via Desktop Authority’s patented Validation Logic technology. For example, a user’s machine is configured to use the closest printer based on the location of the workstation. Desktop Authority also ensures that configurations on a machine eliminate security risks; for example, password expiration is checked at each logon and the user is prompted to change it, if required.

Since Desktop Authority can establish a desktop configuration based on the user via username, group affiliation, placement in Active Directory and other criteria, the same configuration will follow the user wherever they go; when one shift at Deere-Hitachi ends, the next group of workers simply logs on and receives the configurations based on their user account.

Steele found benefits in Desktop Authority features that allowed him to easily complete other tasks previously achieved by scripting. Steele discovered he could use Desktop Authority to push-out software to all users or a select group of users automatically at logon.

Desktop Authority was put to the test when the IT department deployed SP2 across the company. This service pack distribution, a precaution

taken to fill vulnerable holes in the Windows XP operating system, could have been a very lengthy process involving weeks of the IT department's time. However, with Desktop Authority the deployment took days instead of weeks.

Steele continues to expand his use of Desktop Authority at Deere-Hitachi to improve the productivity of his staff. The IT department now uses the product's remote management functionality for secure Web-based access to users' machines. IT staff no longer need to visit each individual machine to deal with a troubleshooting issue.

The Benefits:

Steele said that he and the IT staff now depend on Desktop Authority daily. It has become the essential tool for the department's desktop management needs. Without Desktop Authority, managing 1000 users with a three person staff would be impossible.

Along with the productivity benefits, Desktop Authority provides Steele with peace of mind. The Microsoft Windows XP SP2 distribution, a vital process for IT security, involved 300 machines in two locations, and yet it took less than two days to complete.

About ScriptLogic

ScriptLogic Corporation is a leader in network administration software for Microsoft Windows-based networks. ScriptLogic's award winning suite of desktop, server, and Active Directory management products help empower network administrators to proactively save time, increase security, and maintain regulatory compliance. With more than 15,000 customer

installations that include more than 3.7 million desktops and 88,000 servers, ScriptLogic solutions benefit any size network in any industry. ScriptLogic is a privately held company headquartered in Boca Raton, Florida.

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