



Alaska DOT Simplifies Imaging Process with the Universal Imaging Utility

Alaska DOT

The Anchorage International Airport served more than five million passengers in 2005, is a major contributor to the local Anchorage economy, and is one of its top employers. It is ranked as the top U.S. airport for landed weight of cargo aircraft and third in the world in the category of cargo throughput. On a weekly basis, more than 650 wide-body cargo flights land at the airport.

The Situation

The Anchorage International Airport Department of Transportation employs approximately 500 people. Rodney Watson, micro computer network technician, is responsible for setting up and maintaining approximately 250 computers and more than 30 servers spread throughout the facility. In an organization that is physically spread over the entire airport, this means at times travelling to the other side of the facility to physically update a computer for a user. With so many computers, this proves to be a time consuming task.

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The Challenge

In order to keep the 250 machines in the organization up to date, the operating system for each computer is periodically refreshed. This ensures that the latest OS fixes and security patches are in place. Due to limitations in their Ghost cloning software, Watson maintained 25 to 30 different Master Image files. He had to maintain one image for each computer platform (or type of computer) in his network. “Updating each of the images from scratch would take at least an hour,” Watson explained. “Pulling down patches from various web sites takes a lot of time. If you’re loading a brand new machine from scratch, it would take a minimum of three hours. We had to find a way to accomplish this more efficiently and save time.”

The Solution

Watson worked for a different company several years ago when he was introduced to Big Bang LLC’s Universal Imaging Utility (UIU). After testing it, he

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immediately purchased it for his department. When he joined the Alaska International Airport's Department of Transportation, he again found that the process in use for updating machines was so tedious and time consuming that he didn't hesitate to bring in the UIU to help.

With the UIU, Watson now maintains only two image files, one image for Windows XP and one for Windows 2000. They are easy to keep updated, and he knows they are always current. This is a significant reduction from the 25 to 30 images formerly maintained.

"Now, I touch just one machine, which saves a tremendous amount of time and network space, as the typical image size using the UIU is much smaller," explains Watson. "It simplifies the imaging process greatly." Watson uses it across the organization. "The hours saved by using UIU are immeasurable. Any product like this, I'm behind 100 percent. It frees up my time so that I can focus on other tasks that really need to be done, instead of working on mindless administrative tasks."

Financial Impact

"To update an image from scratch, it took a minimum of an hour or more," says Watson. "With 25 to 30 images to update, that equated to more than 30 hours. By reducing our image count to two, we were able to cut two-thirds of our man hours on this task by using the UIU. What used to take about 1,500 total hours per year now takes less than 500 hours, so we've cut the time spent by 66 percent. I estimate it has saved our fairly small organization about \$50,000 per year, including salary and server space costs, so you can imagine what the savings might be for a larger organization. The

positive impact of having the ability for our organization to re-invest those 1000 labor hours into more productive projects throughout the year is difficult to Measure." Watson continued, "The UIU has not only allowed us to be more efficient in our image management but to also put our IT staff on more critical projects."

The Future

As for the future, Watson hopes to expand the use of UIU to other types of systems in the organization. "We're always trying to think of ways to increase usage of the UIU," says Watson. "I've used this product across three organizations in two different states and feel that it's very simple to use and relatively inexpensive compared to other software costs these days. Purchasing the UIU should be an easy decision for most IT managers."



About the Universal Imaging Utility

The Universal Imaging Utility (UIU) is developed by Big Bang LLC, a Milwaukee, WI-based software development, training, and consulting company. Learn more about Big Bang and the UIU at www.uiu4u.com.

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