

“Keeping our IT systems up and running is a matter of life and death for us. Zenoss Enterprise helps us monitor our IT systems’ health, minimizing costly and potentially dangerous downtime.”

Jim Stalder, CIO Mercy Health Systems

SUCCESS STORY

MERCY KEEPS SYSTEMS ALIVE WITH ZENOSS

Overview

Challenge: To implement a dependable, reliable and affordable IT management solution that would ensure the health and performance of the organization’s rapidly expanding heterogeneous IT environment.

Solution: Mercy selected Zenoss Enterprise IT Management solution with Inventory and Change Management, Configuration Management Database (CMDB), Availability, Performance Monitoring and Events Management capabilities.

Business Value:

- **Zenoss Enterprise helps Mercy automatically discover and populate the CMDB with its IT environment including networks, servers, software, and applications.**
- **Zenoss Enterprise builds a model of the Mercy environment to deploy automatic availability and performance monitors.**
- **Solution automatically alerts Mercy IT to performance issues enabling them to take proactive action to avoid costly and potentially dangerous down time.**
- **Zenoss solution also helps Mercy IT to monitor a wide variety of applications including patient records that are used by health care staff administering critical real time care.**
- **Zenoss Enterprise enabled Mercy IT to transition from reactive into a proactive team.**

AT A GLANCE

Industry:
Healthcare

Year Founded:
1874

Stock Exchange:
Non Profit

Number of Employees:
2506

Revenues:
\$430 Million

Customers:
1,200,000 minutes of surgery per year,
60,000 emergency room visits and
19,000 admitted patients staying average
of 3 days

HQ:
Baltimore, Maryland

Mercy is a full service medical center delivering a comprehensive range of health services including internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, urology, pediatrics, gastroenterology, cardiology, minimally invasive and cosmetic surgery, ophthalmology, rehabilitative care and emergency medicine.

Mercy’s Key Initiatives:

- Deploy a reliable IT management solution that would monitor the health and performance of Mercy’s heterogeneous IT environment.
- Minimize investment costs.
- Enable the IT organization to scale with the growth of the business.

Managing Growth

Mercy experienced explosive growth over the past five years and it has tripled its investment in technology. Mercy IT had to scale to support over 200 unique applications running on approximately 200 servers with new technology solutions such as storage and bandwidth intensive digital x-ray solutions as well as transaction intensive electronic health records. Mercy used a manual process to validate that the systems were running properly by checking log files and monitoring disparate applications for performance metrics. This was a process that consumed a lot of resources from the Mercy IT team.

As internal demand for expensive healthcare solutions have been increasing, the IT department has been asked to cut cost and consolidate its operations. Mercy IT had to consolidate 2 data centers while struggling to support the new technology implementations.

“With so many things happening at once, we (Mercy IT) had a hard time keeping up” says Jim Stalder. “As a result, our enterprise monitoring was somewhat neglected and we soon found ourselves in a reactive mode.” Jim added “When doctors and nurses started calling the helpdesk from the bed side and telling us that applications were not working, we knew we had a problem.”

At first, Mercy IT looked at the traditional, big box players in the enterprise management space. After a few months of review and site visits with existing customers, Mercy realized how resource intensive some of the traditional solutions had become. The high cost of ownership for traditional vendors’ solutions was also a major deterrent, and Jim says “Frankly we didn’t have the resources we thought would be required to take full advantage of the proprietary solutions. They were just more complex than we wanted and full of features that we didn’t really need.”

Immediate ROI

Zenoss Enterprise solution was brought in and deployed within a few hours. Mercy was able to automatically discover its IT networks and build a model based CMDB to deploy system monitors providing immediate value. Linux based Zenoss Enterprise was used to monitor both Windows and Linux environments without the need to deploy agents which saved time and cost for the IT team.

Mercy realized the advantage of Zenoss Enterprise within a few hours as performance issues were discovered and proactive actions helped avert production failures. “Zenoss provided us an affordable entry point, using the resources we already had” says Jim Stalder. “It only took about six weeks to get everything up and running where we were truly benefiting from it. We could never have done that with another solution.”

Prior to deploying Zenoss Enterprise, Mercy had experienced frequent production failures that caused downtime in production. Now, with Zenoss, Mercy IT has several different people running the Zenoss dashboard at the same time while they receive real time alerts. Mercy Help Desk acts as the front line support and they can monitor for important information about the health of various systems if/when users call with problems, which frees up the IT team to proactively work to avoid costly production failures.

Zenoss Enterprise Advantage for Mercy

- Mercy is able to share the Zenoss solution and has multiple people monitoring all the various applications at the same time. Mercy Help Desk is easily able to get immediate information about the health of our environment and engage engineers (if they have not been alerted already).
- Mercy log files are consolidated into one location. Previously, Mercy had to manually go to each machine and review log files. Zenoss Enterprise has been a significant time saver when it comes to looking across various systems to understand health and performance issues.
- Mercy previously organized their monitoring environment “by the server” – not the “system”. They can now see how various inter-dependent systems are impacted by problems – not just a single server.

SysAdmin Ryan Handley’s Perspective

“I find Zenoss to be extremely user friendly. It provides easy navigation and intuitive administration capabilities. I believe that most IT professionals can pick it up easily and quickly. In a typical day, I use the Zenoss dashboard to view the performance of the systems that I support. With its colorful web interface, I can easily see what is occurring in my environment and quickly drill down to event log history, performance graphs and trending analysis. The way that Zenoss displays information is also a real time saver; I spend less time logging into systems and I can do most of my troubleshooting using the data provided. I work proactively using Zenoss, and I am able to find smaller problems before they become bigger ones. Above all, I love the flexibility and stability Zenoss has given me. Zenoss allows me personally to be more efficient and effective. I would definitely recommend it to other System Administrators.”