



“With the Hitachi IT Operations Analyzer solution we can achieve full visibility of our entire infrastructure and be alerted to any issues in real time. This enables us to operate much more efficiently and deliver an enhanced service to our patients.”

David Williams
Director of Information and Technology
Aspen Healthcare



Aspen Healthcare

INDUSTRY Healthcare

SOLUTIONS **IT Operations Solutions**
Software — Hitachi IT Operations Analyzer
Services — Provided by Hitachi TrueNorth Channel Partner Ibertek

Aspen Healthcare Enhances Control of Its IT Environment with Hitachi IT Operations Analyzer Software

A stay in hospital can be a daunting experience for many people, but Aspen Healthcare is committed to making it as easy as possible by delivering excellent care. In order to do this, it needs to get the best performance from its IT infrastructure and minimise downtime. It chose to implement Hitachi IT Operations Analyzer software to automatically monitor its environment and flag any potential issues. This enables Aspen to allocate resources more efficiently so staff and physicians have access to the information they need, when they need it, to continue delivering excellent care to patients.

Aspen Healthcare operates a network of private acute hospitals and one outpatient Oncology Clinic in and around London. Its high quality services portfolio covers a wide range of diagnostic tests and treatments, from health screening to cosmetic surgery, specialised cancer treatments and post-operative nursing care.

The organisation is committed to delivering excellent care to every patient, but as a private healthcare provider it faces the dual challenge of meeting high medical standards while operating a successful

business at the same time. Keeping each site's IT infrastructure running efficiently is an important element in addressing this challenge, as staff and clinicians rely on fast access to data in all aspects of their roles.

"Information is crucial for us," says Director of Information and Technology at Aspen Healthcare, David Williams. "Of course we need to keep detailed corporate records, but the number one priority is ensuring that doctors and staff can access patient records or medical images when they need

them, so they can provide the best possible care and service. Our systems are managed such that we achieve minimal downtime to prevent any disruption."

For this reason, Williams and his team need to keep a very close eye on their technology resources. Aspen's heterogeneous IT infrastructure, including storage, is spread across all of its four sites. IT staff are based in each location to maintain systems and to be on hand so that should an issue arise, they can effect a quick resolution.

The ability to monitor systems centrally is necessary to ensure the organisation is making the best use of its equipment and resources. "Some administrative tasks can be very time consuming, unfortunately," Williams comments. "It needs to be done but can require a lot of time and individual attention. And in some cases it's a 24/7 requirement. Outside of office hours, there's just as much risk that a switch could fail or a server could require attention, but hospitals don't just shut down at five thirty."

Centralising and Bringing Automation to the Whole Environment

What Aspen required was a more centralised, automated way of monitoring its entire infrastructure and flagging any



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David Williams
Director of Information and Technology
Aspen Healthcare Limited

potential issues before they became critical, at any time of the day or night. Its existing server architecture included monitoring and management features, but had limitations. Other areas such as storage, switches and other components were not included. Aspen therefore began research for a solution that would cover its whole environment at a cost appropriate to its medium sized business needs.

“We looked at approximately nine different infrastructure management tools and were determined to find one that was as all encompassing as possible,” explains Williams. “It was essential that the solution would not only monitor our environment constantly, but also provide real time alerts to any problems, so that our support staff could resolve them quickly and avoid downtime.”

After considering the features, benefits and associated costs of all the options, Aspen Healthcare decided to purchase licenses for Hitachi IT Operations Analyzer software to carry out performance and availability monitoring and alerting across its whole infrastructure. Beginning with licenses for up to 50 devices, the organisation is monitoring more than 30 servers as well as core switches, its SAN environment and the Hitachi NAS Platform, powered by BlueArc®. The Root Cause Analysis feature of IT Operations Analyzer along with easy network visualisation and unified, intuitive web-based interface provide all of the tools that are required for Aspen to better manage its IT environment.

The licenses and guidelines for use were secured through local best-of-breed solutions provider and Hitachi TrueNorth Channel Partner Ibertek (www.ibertek.com). “The deployment was simple as we had a trial version of the software installed,” recalls Williams. “All that we needed to do was purchase the licenses to expand its use across our environment. It was clear that the Hitachi solution offered us great value for the money.”

Gaining Visibility and Peace of Mind

As well as the peace of mind that comes from knowing that any potential threats to system availability will be identified quickly, 24 hours a day, every day, Williams and his team now have greater visibility of the whole IT environment. They are able to use the software to check the percentage availability and uptime of any given server. “Because we know the performance thresholds of each server in use, we can allocate resources more effectively, increasing uptime and therefore boosting our staff’s ability to manage our patients’ pathways,” Williams says.

Being able to view system performance and balance workloads more evenly across the server estate also means that Aspen Healthcare is able to avoid bottlenecks in areas that had previously been the cause of problems. “Our departments, such as patient appointment bookings, are always busy,” explains Williams. “We are now in a position to better identify the busy periods and any abnormal peaks in activity, so we can ensure system resources are concentrated in the right areas. With IT Operations Analyzer we can locate these hot spots and act quickly to maintain performance before it impacts on activity and therefore keep things running smoothly. Previously, this was much more difficult to do.”

Tallying Time Savings

The intelligence gathered and presented by IT Operations Analyzer software not only represents a deeper level of understanding of the IT environment, but it also saves time. “The time saved thanks to the automated monitoring features equates to about half an employee,” Williams says. “But that employee would only be working an eight hour day, so we’re saving approximately 35 hours a week while gaining 24 hour visibility of our infrastructure. It’s win-win!”

With the Hitachi IT Operations Analyzer solution now part of its IT infrastructure and bringing noticeable benefits for both IT and staff — and, by extension, patients — Aspen Healthcare is planning further improvements to its technology resources. Williams concludes: “We’ve been very impressed by the solution that Hitachi Data Systems and Ibertek have provided and we’ll certainly be talking to them about incorporating additional Hitachi products into our environment in the future.”

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