



Microsoft Windows XP Professional Customer Solution Case Study



Commercial Leasing Company Increases Security with Desktop Operating System Solution

Overview

Country: United States

Industry: Finance

Customer Profile

Signature Capital, located in Austin, Texas, is a commercial leasing company offering financing options for automobiles and business equipment. The company employs 12 people.

Business Situation

Signature Capital needed to increase its technology infrastructure security and reduce the downtime it was experiencing due to disparate operating systems.

Solution

Technology partner TECTURA Corporation introduced Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional with Service Pack 2 to the Signature Capital environment, increasing network security and strengthening the desktop operating system.

Benefits

- Enhanced functionality increases security
- Automatic Updates helps keep computers up-to-date
- Reduced troubleshooting time lowers IT costs
- Stable network improves productivity

“As a small business, you will spend multiple hours trying to solve a problem before you pay \$100 to have someone come in and fix it. Now I have control over that time and money.”

Keith Buchanan, President, Signature Capital

Signature Capital provides customized vehicle and equipment financing packages to meet the specific financial needs of its clients. As a small startup company, Signature Capital was lacking the resources it needed to strengthen the security of its technology infrastructure, leaving it vulnerable to computer hackers, viruses, and worms. Technology partner TECTURA Corporation introduced Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional with Service Pack 2 to the Signature Capital computing environment. The enhanced features of the operating system (OS)—such as Windows Firewall, Automatic Updates, and Internet Explorer Pop-Up Blocker—helped address the company’s security issues. As a result, Signature Capital has seen a reduction of pop-up ads; increased productivity due to less time spent troubleshooting, and gained greater confidence in the security of its infrastructure.

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Keith Buchanan, President, Signature Capital

Situation

Based in Austin, Texas, Signature Capital is a small financing company providing vehicle and equipment financing packages to consumers and businesses. With only 12 employees, Signature Capital does not have the luxury of an in-house IT department.

Signature Capital employees use 15 computers including both desktops and laptops. These computers run several different operating systems including Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional, Windows 2000 Professional, and Windows 98. Without a dedicated IT staff person, Signature Capital must support day-to-day computing needs with a limited knowledge base. Attending to IT issues greatly affects employee productivity on a day-to-day basis.

For employees to perform necessary daily business functions, the company must have safe, reliable connectivity with the Internet. Transactions with other business Web sites, such as getting customer quotes and credit checks, occur daily. These daily information transactions are of great concern to management because of potential security threats from hackers, computer viruses, and virus-infected e-mail. “If our computer system crashes or if we are unable to run business-critical Internet applications, it directly affects our bottom line,” says Keith Buchanan, President of Signature Capital.

With several operating systems in use, the company also had trouble with stability. Employees repeatedly faced networking issues, such as printing and file sharing problems. “Although a printing issue is a fairly easy problem to rectify, if you add up all the time you spend working on those little problems, you begin to realize just how much time you are wasting,” says Buchanan.

For hardware and software implementation, Signature Capital relies on TECTURA

Corporation, a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner with access to prerelease versions of Microsoft software. When TECTURA offered Signature Capital the opportunity to test and evaluate Microsoft Windows XP Service Pack 2, the customer gladly accepted the chance to become more efficient, knowledgeable, and secure. To implement Service Pack 2, all computers had to be running Windows XP Professional. “TECTURA talked to us about different security issues that we had and what we could do to address those issues,” says Buchanan. “It was apparent to us that standardizing on Windows XP Professional was the best first step.”

Solution

Windows XP Service Pack 2 is a set of technologies that provide companies and individuals with greater protection against hackers, viruses, and worms through enhanced features such as Windows Firewall, Internet Explorer Pop-Up Blocker, and Automatic Updates.

TECTURA prepared an inventory of the Signature Capital computing environment and performed an analysis of hardware and software to determine what the company would need to implement Windows XP Service Pack 2. Essential to this phase was ensuring that all computers had enough random access memory (RAM) to upgrade to Windows XP Professional.

TECTURA tracked all components of the installation process in the event of problems; however, the partner encountered no major bugs. “TECTURA did a phenomenal job as far as coming in and evaluating what we had,” says Buchanan. “We didn’t lose any information in the transition. Everybody in the company has been pleased and impressed with the short amount of time it has taken to stabilize our network.”

“The new security functionalities of the Internet Explorer browser have removed a lot of our previous vulnerabilities and insecurities.”

Keith Buchanan, President, Signature Capital

Benefits

The enhanced security features of Windows XP Professional with Service Pack 2 helped address the security concerns of Signature Capital management. And by standardizing computers on Windows XP Professional, Signature Capital gained greater stability of the computing environment and reduced time spent resolving problems.

Enhanced Functionality Increases Security

Even though Signature Capital has a network firewall and antivirus software, the company still had problems with malicious code entering its system. Now, with Windows XP Professional with Service Pack 2, each desktop computer has a firewall that is activated by default. Windows Firewall helps protect against viruses and hackers by extending firewall protection from PC startup to shutdown.

Enhancements to Internet Explorer include built-in security zones that restrict interactions between a Web site and the user's computer. Signature Capital can add sites to its Trusted Zone, which will allow interaction with the Web sites that the company uses for business transactions. “The new security functionalities of the Internet Explorer browser have removed a lot of our previous vulnerabilities and insecurities,” says Buchanan.

Internet Explorer Pop-Up Blocker, a component designed to prevent pop-up ads from reaching a user's desktop, has been crucial for Signature Capital. By stopping pop-up windows from appearing on company computers, it also helps prevent malicious code from entering the system. “Prior to Windows XP Professional, our employees were having trouble with Internet pop-up ads and viruses that took away from productivity,” says Buchanan. “Since having Windows XP Professional with Service Pack 2 installed, we haven't seen any of these problems.”

Automatic Updates Helps Keep Computers Up-to-Date

Prior to installing Windows XP Professional, Signature Capital paid an external vendor to perform maintenance and updates. Now, with the Automatic Updates feature, each computer is alerted when a critical software update is available and ready for download. Management now knows that its PCs will have the latest updates installed automatically. Buchanan no longer needs to wonder whether the company's computers are adequately protected against viruses and worms. With Windows XP Professional, the latest updates are installed on a user's PC as soon as possible to protect a company's business assets.

Reduced Troubleshooting Time Lowers IT Costs

The security features of Windows XP Professional with Service Pack 2 not only provide greater security to the desktop, but also reduce the amount of time that employees spend on eradicating viruses and troubleshooting. Buchanan estimates that, prior to the companywide upgrade to Windows XP Professional, at least one Signature Capital employee would experience 30 minutes of downtime per day due to technical issues. These issues would require management to provide support and troubleshooting to employees, taking away time from their managerial roles. “If you take those 30 minutes a day and place them in the context of an entire year, that's roughly 120 hours a year that our business is losing productivity.”

Those 30 minutes a day do not include time spent in broken concentration. “When we are working on a financial proposal, for instance, we are basically piecing together a puzzle,” says Buchanan. “If we have an issue that takes 20 minutes to resolve, it may take an additional hour to regain the focus that we had when we were in the process. That is a

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For more information about TECTURA products and services, call (800) 510-4290 or visit the Web site at: www.tectura.com

For more information about Signature Capital products and services, call (800) 213-7971 or visit the Web site at: www.signature-capital.com

very real cost.”

Stable Network Improves Productivity

With every computer running the same operating system, interoperability issues such as print and file sharing are no longer a problem. “As a small business, you will spend multiple hours trying to solve a problem before you pay \$100 to have someone come in and fix it,” says Buchanan. “Now I have control over that time and money.” As a result, productivity has increased while compatibility issues have decreased, with less time spent by employees and partners trying to solve problems. Since implementing Windows XP Professional, Signature Capital has had no major downtime. “The network is practically running itself,” says Buchanan.

Microsoft Windows XP Professional

Microsoft Windows XP Professional gives you the freedom to do what you want at home and at work—simply, reliably, and securely.

For more information about Windows XP Professional, go to: www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/pro

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