Tivoli® software

United Space Alliance counts down to infrastructure efficiency.

Overview

- **Challenge**

  Improve service quality and efficiency by providing IT staff with real-time visibility of incident, problem, change and configuration management
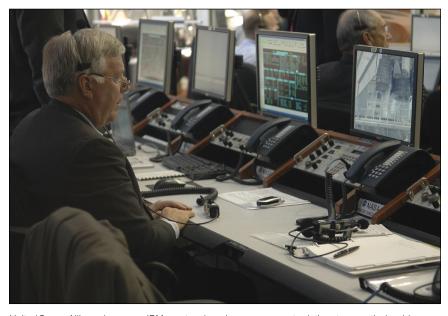
- **Why IBM?**

  IBM provided a platform to unify disparate IT systems and give staff a single real-time view of asset and service management

- **Solution**

  An integrated asset and service management platform based on IT Infrastructure Library® (ITIL®) best practices

- **Key Benefits**

  Reduced repair times; improved IT service; helps staff minimize downtime, plan ahead and budget; will help staff efficiently meet and exceed SLAs

United Space Alliance leverages IBM asset and service management solutions to proactively address service incidents before they become serious issues.

IT organizations are constantly looking to provide better, more reliable services and support with smaller budgets and fewer personnel. This is the task ahead for the IT department at United Space Alliance (USA), LLC. As the largest contractor for the NASA space shuttle program, it has more than 10,000 employees in Texas, Florida, Alabama and Washington, D.C. The 2 billion USD company relies on 400 IT experts to manage more than 50,000 hardware assets, 100,000 software assets as well as to support traditional incident and problem management responsibilities.

"We had to change our approach because we were storing IT asset information in five different databases. With fewer IT staff, keeping track of those assets would be extremely difficult."

– *Mike Schnoke, Project Manager, United Space Alliance*

Improving efficiency by unifying IT systems and adopting ITIL best practices

> *"Sharing data so that we only have to solve a problem once means that we can fix IT issues faster, and that we don't have to send 10 technicians to fix the same problem on 10 machines. That is the biggest payback from Tivoli software so far."*
>
> *– Mike Schnoke*

To streamline the company's operations, USA Project Manager Mike Schnoke and his staff had to figure out how to replace the disparate, siloed IT service management (ITSM) and asset management systems with one platform delivering a unified view of incident, problem, change, configuration and release management, along with a comprehensive view of the organization's IT assets. Doing so would make it easier to proactively address service incidents before they become full-fledged fires. More importantly, one integrated asset and service management system would allow United Space Alliance to manage its IT infrastructure more efficiently.

After researching possible solutions, Schnoke and his team realized that embracing the Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) best practices would be critical to their success. United Space Alliance evaluated several solutions and ultimately chose IBM Tivoli Asset Management for IT and IBM Tivoli Service Desk.

Bringing IT assets into one database

IT efficiency is a constant goal and challenge for enterprises. The larger the company, the bigger the challenge. "Even with fewer IT experts, we'll have to provide the same level of service," says Schnoke. "We had to change our approach because we were storing IT asset information in five different databases. With fewer IT staff, keeping track of those assets would be extremely difficult."

Previously, managers did not have an accurate, real-time view of which employees had what software and hardware at any given time. This lack of visibility complicated crucial change management and configuration management processes because representatives didn't know whether the information they saw was up to date. Implementing changes such as deploying new software to resolve problems often leads to new problems if the configuration data of an IT asset is inaccurate.

USA realized that unifying its IT systems and adopting ITIL best practices were essential to making its infrastructure, and the staff that manages it, more efficient. To assess the effectiveness of IT asset and service management products, USA studied a variety of factors, including alignment with ITIL best practices based on industry consultant Pink Elephant Pink Verify certification. USA selected Tivoli software because it achieved Pink Verify certification and because it provides one platform to unify disparate IT systems to give staff one real-time view of asset and service management.

Rapid resolution through self-service Web access

One of the first issues for USA to resolve was consolidating incident management and streamlining help desk interaction so IT staff can respond efficiently to problems. Previously, employees had to navigate through a variety of Web sites and forms to file a service request.

By deploying IBM Tivoli Service Desk, USA is providing self-service Web access to all employees via a portal. Employees need only click on the portal to find quick solutions to common problems or an easy-to-file service request, which becomes an incident that automatically sends staff from the right IT department to the rescue.

Tivoli software helps ensure IT staff throughout USA have access to incident and problem records. Technicians can now apply previous solutions to common problems without having to "reinvent the wheel," according to Schnoke.

"We had a tendency to solve the same problems over and over," says Schnoke. "Sharing data so that we only have to solve a problem once means that we can fix IT issues faster, and that we don't have to send 10 technicians to fix the same problem on 10 machines. That is the biggest payback from Tivoli software so far."

Tivoli software will also help USA to meet the service level agreements (SLAs) it establishes for maintaining maximum IT uptime and minimizing repair times. Previously, the company used a priority system where any manager could request a top priority, which didn't give IT staff an accurate view of how serious a problem was and what they would need to fix it. Using ITIL guidelines, Tivoli software prioritizes incidents based on urgency and impact, giving managers the visibility to see exactly what is wrong and how to repair it so IT staff can meet or exceed SLAs.

Proactive processes to drive greater efficiency

USA will also become more proactive in how it effects change and configuration management throughout the company, minimizing problems with improperly installed software and enterprise-wide software rollouts. IBM Tivoli Asset Management for IT provides IT staff with extensive visibility into users' individual PCs, providing details about whether someone's computer has software loaded that could cause infrastructure problems.

"We became very good at fighting fires when, in fact, the problems shouldn't have escalated to that point. We now have the tools to anticipate and address issues before they escalate and to plan for major projects. That is the kind of efficiency the IBM platform will deliver."

− Mike Schnoke

By being proactive with change and configuration management, USA will not only minimize downtime that costs money and slows productivity, but also will have a better view of upcoming projects and how to plan and budget for them. For example, the company will be able to plan ahead and budget for deploying the latest version of Windows, reducing some of the challenges it previously faced.

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For more information

Please contact your IBM sales representative or IBM Business Partner.

Visit our Web site at:
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You can get even more out of Tivoli software by participating in independently run Tivoli User Groups around the world. Learn about opportunities near you at: **www.tivoli-ug.org**

For more information about United Space Alliance, visit:
www.unitedspacealliance.com