



The Power of Being There®



Case Study

Chemical Company discovers unique element for success

“What truly sets Avocent apart from all the others is the remote accessibility. You don't have to run to the office everytime there is a problem. You can fix the problem from wherever you are. And that means reduced downtime which benefits everyone.”

*Bruce Wright,
Systems Administrator/
Enterprise Server Operations,
Nova Chemicals*

• Nova Chemicals is a commodity chemicals company that produces exceptional resins and chemical and energy co-products. These elements are the building blocks for a variety of products used in everyday life. From grocery bags to packaging to medical devices, Nova Chemicals is committed to excellence and ensuring that outstanding products provide comfort, security and stability in today's fast paced world.

World-wide locations cause major reactions

With operating centres in Calgary, AB and Pittsburgh, PA, manufacturing and research centres located in the Americas and Europe, and sales offices located across North America and throughout Europe and Asia, Nova Chemicals essentially operated in numerous time zones.

Add to that, Nova Chemicals had approximately 30 UNIX and 90 Intel windows servers that were mostly connected individually or into non-networkable KVM appliances in the Calgary centre and it's easy to see that a problem in Europe for example, would cause a late night reaction back home.

“We have eighteen IT staff, with all but two located in the Calgary Operations Centre” explains Bruce Wright, Systems Administrator/Enterprise Server Operations. “Whenever there is a problem in Europe, we would need a Calgary area IT staff member to wake up and run down to the data centre at 2 or 3 in the morning. A process that inevitably creates serious delays and increases our downtime.”

Avocent solution proves to be an essential element for success

When the data centre eventually moved to new premises, it provided an opportunity to reassess the IT infrastructure and implement a new solution. One that would help staff react and respond to problems sooner, reduce costly downtime and free up valuable data centre space that was previously overloaded with individual cables, keyboards, and monitors from the numerous servers.

However, changes are often met with some resistance. Therefore, choosing a solution was not an easy task. It would require finding a solution that could be easily implemented and essentially simplify the IT department's training and responsibilities. More importantly, the solution would need to meet the senior management's necessity for cost efficiency and R.O.I.

“Avocent offered a complete solution that was web enabled and provided remote accessibility” says Wright. “And because of their market share, they are the industry leaders and bring with them a cache of exceptional products and extraordinary support.”

The choice was obvious. And when it came time, Nova Chemicals ordered 7 Avocent DSR2161 KVM switches, in their quest to substantially improve their IT infrastructure. Part of the Avocent DS series, the premiere KVM over IP solution for enterprises, the DSR2161 uses a combination of analog and digital technologies to provide powerful server and serial device management – anytime, anywhere. “Essentially, TCP/IP connectivity puts the entire data centre at our fingertips, whether we are at the data centre, at home, or around the world” adds Wright.

Implementation leads to increased benefits

The implementation of the new Avocent web-enabled solution at Nova Chemical proceeded smoothly. IT staff found the physical installation to be relatively easy and anytime a question arose, Avocent technical support quickly provided an answer.

“The only challenge we faced was with the web enabled portion, however Avocent technical support was super and quickly had everything running smooth. They are reliable, really work with you to help iron out any problems and have excellent follow up as well” adds Wright.

Now, not only does the new, remote access, web-enabled solution provide Nova Chemical with quicker response and reduced downtimes, the solution also provides a host of new benefits. These benefits range from centralized authentication and administration, to scalability and CAT 5 advanced cable management.

DSView software is an important element of the Avocent DS series, providing CLICK AND CONNECT™ access and control, anytime, anywhere. DSView allows Nova Chemical IT users to view and manage all of the data centre devices on one screen – regardless of whether they are a mix of multi-platform servers, routers or power devices or located around the world. In addition, centralized authentication and administration leverages existing network credentials, ensures security and simplifies system administration.

The new solution has also helped Nova Chemicals to free up valuable data centre space – since there are a lot less keyboards, monitors and bundles of cable hanging around. The DSRIQ cable interface allows servers to be attached using standard CAT 5 cabling, which significantly reduces cable clutter.

Favourable Reactions

Wright noted that they are very pleased with the Avocent solution and judging from the initial success he would definitely consider upgrading to the latest Avocent DS Series application and implement it into new data centres in the future.

“I can tell you that the IT staff love it. It has made their jobs and their lives easier. And because we don't have to be on site, we can fix the problem from wherever we are. It definitely helps us to react and respond to problems much quicker and cuts down our response time significantly. Plus, it makes more efficient use of our IT staff time, since we're not wasting time running back and forth to the data centre” asserts Wright.

Now with remote access, Nova Chemical IT staff can use the current network to access current servers – a process that was previously unavailable on the individual servers. So, now when someone in Europe experiences a problem, they can simply access the centre and fix the problem. And that makes senior management extremely happy, because reduced downtime benefits everyone.

“Avocent, as an OEM, really know their products,” concludes Wright. “You get superior products and tremendous support. And that has created favourable reactions around here”.

About Avocent

Avocent is the leading worldwide supplier of KVM switching and connectivity solutions that provide IT managers with access and control of multiple servers and network data centre devices. Avocent was formed in July 2000 by the merger of leading industry innovators Cybex Computer Products Corporation and Apex Inc. Avocent's KVM solutions are distributed by the world's largest server manufacturers and installed in Fortune 100 companies around the world.

Headquartered in Huntsville, Ala., Avocent has locations in the states of Washington, Florida, Massachusetts and Texas. International locations include Canada, Australia, Ireland, Great Britain, Germany, Japan, China and Singapore. Visit www.avocent.ca for more information about Avocent products.

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Avocent's DSR™ switching solutions offer a flexible, scalable design that work with existing network architecture.