

Virginia Tech Maps Out Problems with PRTG

“I’m the main person that deals with the off-campus networks. I configure the equipment, monitor and make changes to it,” Crawford said. “I do the planning and implementation for all of these sites.”

In total, these sites add up to roughly 180 access points and 500 total devices, including switches, routers, servers and more. He previously used Ipswitch WhatsUp Gold to monitor each location, but found it to be disorganized and complex. After a trial implementation, Crawford ultimately decided to switch to PRTG Network Monitor to gain a comprehensive overview of his entire network through an easy-to-use dashboard that he could load right from a browser.

“For me, when I did the trial of PRTG, I found it to be much more user friendly. It works in the browser better, because I’m not at the enterprise console all day long. In fact I rarely use [the console]. It was important for me to get something that worked well in the browser.”

“[WhatsUp Gold] wasn’t organized in a way I wanted it to be organized. To me, PRTG was much more logical in terms of the user interface and the implementation.”

Mapping out problems

Crawford and much of the IT department work out of an academic building on campus, but the infrastructure he serves is scattered all over the state. Along with typical network devices, Crawford is also tasked with monitoring servers that host Active Directory, a local backup solution and four SAN units, with additional VMs to be added in the future.

“In and of itself the monitoring of the SAN is really handy,” Crawford said. “We don’t allow that on the public network, so there’s no access to those units, but since PRTG is connected it can monitor the private and public networks, it can send us alerts on everything.”



While Crawford is responsible for maintaining the IT systems, he does work with local IT personnel in each district, six in total, and a help desk of support staff. Through PRTG's alerting and notification features, he has been able to send alerts to different personnel automatically, depending on where the issue is or what part of the system is malfunctioning.

"Being able to distribute responsibilities is very helpful," Crawford said. "We have a help desk and we have area IT people out in the state, and they all get alerts based on what part of the device tree they are in. They all get separate emails based on what's going on in their area."

Many PRTG users take advantage of mapping features to gain insight into their infrastructure through a creative or customized overview. But Crawford takes a more literal approach to mapping – overlaying each distributed office onto a map of Virginia. He also uses PRTG to analyze the service providers that each location uses, which ultimately saves a lot of time on the most basic support tickets.

"What's interesting to me is when the sensors show unusual traffic, a lot of times you can tell. The call we'll have to the help desk is "our internet's down" – well, in fact, no, your internet is not down, someone is hogging all your bandwidth. And that's very easy to spot."

And because they monitor switchboards, they can drill down to the user level to see where issues are happening. This saved Crawford and his team a tremendous amount of time and energy on routine support calls, freeing them up to handle more complex tasks.

ABOUT PAESSLER AG

Paessler AG's award winning PRTG Network Monitor is a powerful, affordable and easy-to-use Unified Monitoring solution. It is a highly flexible and generic software for monitoring IT infrastructure, already in use at enterprises and organizations of all sizes and industries. Over 150,000 IT administrators in more than 170 countries rely on PRTG and gain peace of mind, confidence and convenience. Founded in 1997 and based in Nuremberg, Germany, Paessler AG remains a privately held company that is recognized as both a member of the Cisco Solution Partner Program and a VMware Technology Alliance Partner.

PRESS CONTACT

Paessler AG

press@paessler.com

T: +49 911 93 775-0

F: +49 911 93 775-409

Four Communications

Paessler@fourcommunications.com

T: +44 20 369 742-00

F: +44 20 369 742-01

ABOUT VIRGINIA TECH COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND LIFE SCIENCES

The Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs) has a large number of distributed offices spread out across the state at different teaching locations, often in rural areas, managed from a central facility. Mark Crawford, network engineer at CALs, is responsible for monitoring a total of 123 facilities around Virginia, supporting network and IT operations at each site. Locations range from small, 3 person offices to one of 13 agricultural research centers across the state.



Paessler AG

www.paessler.com

info@paessler.com

