



PATENE builds network resilience through NiTO monitoring solution, ensuring uptime and performance

ABOUT PATENE

Patene Building Supply Ltd. is a construction building materials supplier to contractors, home builders and homeowners across Ontario and Manitoba. It is a leading supplier of masonry and roofing products, structural and finishing materials, landscaping elements and tools and materials for residential and commercial building. With more than 60 years in business, the company boasts offices and warehouses in 15 locations, a fleet of more than 90 trucks and a supply chain focused on timely delivery of high-quality materials.



Branch Offices (Canada):
14 across Ontario, 1 in Manitoba



Infrastructure:
VLANs between 12 sites with thin-client remote desktops

The company runs on remote desktops across its locations, with virtual LANs (VLANs) between 12 of the locations and a mix of services connecting the remaining three, including a site-to-site wireless connection at its remotest branch in Milton, Ont. Because of telecom service availability in various locations, many of Patene's branch offices are on DSL connections; maintaining these connections and ensuring availability of IT services is crucial to business continuity.

CHALLENGE

Patene was burdened by the frequency of updates its monitoring solution required and sought out one that required less work to support.

Before the fall of 2018, Patene was using a competitor's solution to monitor its IT infrastructure that, while adequate, was quickly proving to be unwieldy and expensive. The frequency of updates was becoming disruptive and forced the company to regularly rebuild its monitoring systems. The solution's costs also climbed alongside its constant updates.

"They were outrageously expensive, and their prices kept going up every year," said Chris Thorpe, Director of Business and Information Technology at Patene.

"The Waterloo Networking Company, who we work with, suggested that NiTO could meet our monitoring needs. They make good suggestions, and I'm glad we followed them to NiTO."

SOLUTION



Thorpe performed a review, running NiTO in parallel with its past infrastructure monitoring solution. He found that not only did NiTO quickly provide everything he needed to fully monitor and maintain the health of his IT infrastructure, but it also did so with reduced impact on resources and was more cost-effective.



NiTO provides critical insights on the performance and availability of IT services at a glance using real-time visualizations through its dashboard. Thorpe can easily monitor across the entire infrastructure in greater detail without needing to resort to additional charts and spreadsheets. Custom alerts can be delivered by text, email or phone to ensure rapid response to any performance challenges to reduce downtime. Should an issue occur, NiTO can drill down to the port level for diagnostics.



NiTO got it right the first time, making selecting it a no-brainer



NiTO was basically ready to deploy out-of-the-box and was up in minutes with minimal training required. In a few short steps, Thorpe had one branch office up and running, and had quickly extended monitoring to all locations. The light-weight SaaS platform has minimal impact on system resources, while offering vital insights into the health and performance of every server, end point, application and device across the network.

“NiTO was simply written properly in the first place and hasn’t required constant updates. With our earlier solution there were updates needed all the time,” Thorpe said. “Each one seemed to break something new, as well as being a serious memory hog.”





BENEFITS

NiTO's dashboard is the first thing Thorpe looks at when he begins his workday. It gives him a complete view of the connectivity and performance of every Patene office and warehouse location.

"I pop it open in the morning and can see the relative speeds to all my branches, and another visualizer gives me a red-light/green-light to quickly know whether anything has gone down," he said. "It gives me everything I need to see at a glance."

NiTO has proven to be the light-weight solution Thorpe was looking for. As a Software as a Service (SaaS) solution, it automatically delivers upgrades and updates without the need for IT involvement. While updates occur, they are non-intrusive (typically happening on weekends) and don't require Thorpe to make any changes on his end.

"It's basically set and forget," he said.



EVERYTHING AT A GLANCE

"I pop it open in the morning and can see the relative speeds to all my branches, and another visualizer gives me a red-light/green-light to quickly know whether anything has gone down. It gives me everything I need to see at a glance."



“Even when a branch is still connected or within tolerance levels, I can see when a branch starts to slow down. Then I can start drilling down into what the issue is and can break it down. I can look at the individual ports on a switch to see where the problem is and what is causing it.”



ENABLING RAPID RESPONSE FOR BUSINESS CONTINUITY



While typically NiTO runs so smoothly Thorpe suggested he rarely needs to think about it, recent events proved to him how valuable it is to the business.

That happened in 2020. “In August, our Thunder Bay office went down. I was alerted immediately via email, and able to use NiTO to look into the problem,” Thorpe recounts.

“It turned out to be an issue of power supply to the firewall, but we were able to get back up and running in short order thanks to the real-time alert.”

Lost time means lost revenue. If a branch loses access to the Internet or IT services, it cannot take orders and the business effectively shuts down.

MONITORING AND DIAGNOSTICS TO ENSURE UPTIME & PERFORMANCE



Poor performance can be nearly as bad as downtime. Fortunately, NiTO provides Thorpe alerts and real-time visualizations as to how well IT resources are performing.

Thorpe says the granularity of NiTO’s monitoring capabilities makes it a good diagnostic tool, even in his thin client environment that adds complexity. “I can see what the problem is very quickly.”

Apart from the recent downtime at the Thunder Bay branch, Patene’s branches typically maintain greater than 99 percent availability, which Thorpe suggests NiTO plays a part in achieving.

“Part of having a network that runs smoothly is, of course, setting the network up right in the first place. Because we have a VLAN for almost all branches our network runs a bit smoother and with lower traffic.”

“But anyone who has multiple branches and a network like us absolutely has to have a tool like NiTO to be able to manage their infrastructure across locations.”