



NITO IMPROVES IT EFFICIENCY AND HELPS SAVE MONEY FOR TOWNSHIP OF SPRINGWATER TAXPAYERS

ABOUT THE TOWNSHIP OF SPRINGWATER



SPRINGWATER, ONTARIO

- Population: 19,059 (in 2016)
- Land Area: 536.28 km²



IT ENVIRONMENT

- Growing physical infrastructure
- Cloud software (Office 365)
- Virtual desktop environment

Formed through amalgamation in 1994, Springwater is a township with nearly 20,000 residents in central southern Ontario. The Township is responsible for administering services to several communities, including Elmvale, Midhurst, Minesing, Hillsdale, and Anten Mills. It provides snow plowing, park maintenance, facility bookings, fire and emergency service, water and sewage, public works and other services across an area greater than 500 square-kilometres. The Springwater IT department supports more than 50 employees, a 90-person volunteer fire

department and approximately two dozen outdoor parks and recreation locations. The IT team is responsible for records management, ERP and LAN management, and oversees numerous on-the-go IT projects for the fast-growing municipality. Because of its proximity to Barrie, Ont., Springwater's population is expected to double over the next 15 to 20 years, and its administrative staff has already seen increases over the past two to three years mirroring the population growth.



CHALLENGE



NiTO allowed the Township of Springwater to offset the costs of adding IT resources, while focusing on finding and creating new efficiencies.

Between 2015 and 2020, Springwater's IT department worked with a managed service provider (MSP) to support its server hardware and network infrastructure. But in early 2020, Springwater IT coordinator Michael Burnie saw an opportunity to reduce costs and improve efficiency by ending their contract with the MSP and instead supporting its IT infrastructure in-house.

“That’s when we started looking into NiTO,” Burnie says.

“Our MSP obviously had its own monitoring tools. But if we were going to manage IT internally, we needed something that could give us better insights into our environment and infrastructure.”

SOLUTION

Burnie discovered NiTO at the InfoSec Conference and Trade Show in late 2019 and, after comparing it with a competitor's solution, determined NiTO was the better solution and deployed it in the spring of 2020. Burnie says several NiTO features made the platform stand out against the competition, including its priority alerting system, service monitoring capabilities and its clean and customizable dashboard. After a quick and painless implementation across the Township's network, the IT team was ready to manage the several dozen servers and network switches in-house. Although a relatively uncomplicated infrastructure, Burnie says managing it would be an impossibility without the insights NiTO provides.

NiTO saves money and improves the efficiency of IT services



To help the Springwater IT team make split-second decisions when needed, NiTO allows them to prioritize which monitoring data and alerts take precedence. Custom alerts are delivered by phone, SMS or email, depending on how critical the issues are, as defined by the team. This allows the two-person team to respond quickly and decisively to any potential problems that arise.



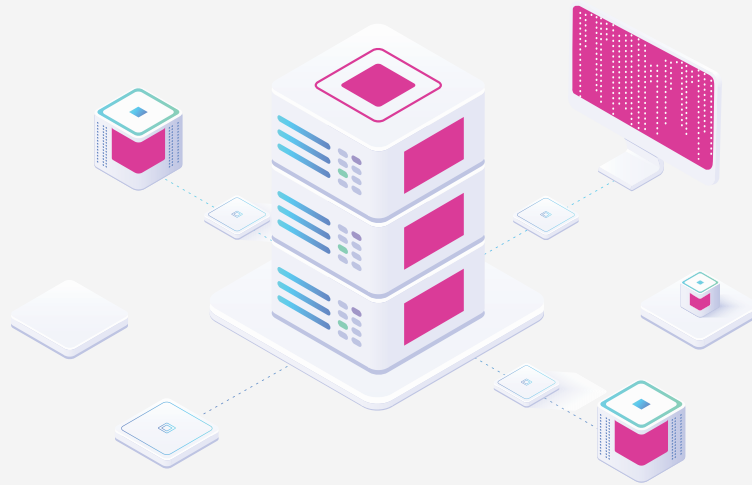
An all-in-one monitoring platform, NiTO provides the Township with near real-time insights into its IT environment, including servers, end points, network devices and, importantly, services, applications and processes. NiTO monitors Windows and Linux OS environments with a four-second resolution. Thanks to the critical data and alerts available in mere seconds, the Springwater IT team can often troubleshoot and restore services before users are even aware of an outage or issue.



NiTO offers a simple, clear view of the performance and availability of all IT infrastructure and services using real-time visualizations through its dashboard. It provides Burnie with an at-a-glance overview of the status and health of his IT environment and any performance issues. With such data, he can also easily see hardware that is reaching capacity and proactively make adjustments. Should an issue arise, and deeper information needed, NiTO can perform more granular port-level diagnostics.

"We've been able to save a lot of money by bringing IT service management in-house. Even when adding a staff resource, we were able to offset costs thanks to the insights NiTO gives us," Burnie says. "Also, because we have better insights into our environment, we are able to act quicker than we were ever able to when we had to rely on an MSP."





BENEFITS

NiTO's monitoring capabilities gives Burnie a comprehensive view of the health of the municipality's IT environment. He has also been able to use the insights from NiTO to right-size and scale up services as needed.

"NiTO helps us to scale our environment," Burnie says. "I'll get an alert saying this server or that server is running out of memory, and I can log onto our hypervisor, shut that server down and increase its RAM. Once that alert stops, I know that we're resourced to correctly meet the need."

The Township of Springwater deployed a new server infrastructure in early 2020, which along with NiTO, helped it to better meet service demands. Burnie says the ability to quickly see where IT resources are struggling to meet demands and the related alerts from NiTO allow him to be more proactive.

"It used to be, I'd get a call from a person in finance saying, 'Hey, my computer is slow today.' Now, thanks to NiTO, I can know that the source of that is our finance server running out of resources. I can quickly add a core or more RAM and fix it," Burnie says. "Those calls don't really come very often anymore, since when we get an alert from NiTO we typically act on it."



A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

When Springwater deployed NiTO, the Township and the rest of the world were in the grip of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Burnie says NiTO helped the Township to focus on creating the business process efficiencies needed to function during the pandemic, such as rolling out a virtual desktop environment so that employees could work remotely.

Township staff that works in the office, work on rotating schedules to avoid physical interaction. It can be a challenge, Burnie says, but one which NiTO has helped alleviate. Because of the platform's remote tools and capabilities, he's able to stay on top of the network and servers from any location. Response time is unaffected by whether he is working from home or the office.

FIXING UN-FIXABLE PROBLEMS



Because of NiTO's ability to monitor at the service or application level, Burnie has even been able to resolve previously unsolvable problems, such as an issue with some legacy software that must be maintained.

"We have this one service that will go down sporadically no matter how many resources we throw at it," Burnie explains. "Ultimately a bunch of files will not be able to be uploaded, and it could a week before a user would tell me about it, and that work will just build up. They don't want to bother me or don't feel it's important enough."

"Now, with NiTO, I'm on top of it. I'm alerted immediately if the service goes down I can resolve it in minutes. I haven't had a single complaint about it being down since we had NiTO, because the handful of times it has, I've been alerted immediately."


EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS



As a municipal government, the Township ultimately has the residents of its communities to answer to. If its IT environment isn't running at optimal performance, then service representatives might be unable to effectively deal with a citizen's issues. Worse, should the system go down, the Township could face a lot of angry residents. Still, at the same time, budget is a major consideration.

"People want to know the government is spending their money wisely, saving money where it can and meeting service expectations," Burnie notes. "And while working with the MSP was great, by bringing that work in-house – which NiTO helped us to do – we have been able to not just reduce costs but also improve efficiency, because an MSP can only have so much insight into our environment."

NiTO has also freed up time for the IT team to look at ways to create additional efficiencies, such as by leveraging open source software solutions, further reducing costs.



"Thanks to NiTO we aren't scrambling to keep things up and running – or to figure out where problems are – so there have been dozens of projects that we've been able to work on. We've been able to scale our environment, and quickly deploy new solutions we needed to, like virtual desktop infrastructure."

