



Illinois Department of Human Services

The Company And Its Network

The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) assists residents in achieving a self-sufficient, independent and healthy lifestyle. IDHS provides integrated, family-oriented services through its community health, prevention, mental health and substance abuse programs; network for persons with developmental disabilities and rehabilitation services.

The department also helps low-income persons with financial support, employment and training services, child care and other family services. The central data center, located in Springfield, employs 2,000 network operators and provides network access for 20,000 users in 300 offices throughout the state. All offices are linked via Frame Relay connections provided by SBC.

For their networking services, the Illinois Department of Human Services enlists the help of Sentinel Technologies. Bill Carter, the Senior Network Analyst on the Sentinel team, describes the IDHS network environment: "The Frame Relay routers between the branch offices are handled by SBC, and the remaining 700 devices that I manage consist of about 685 switches and 15 routers, including the Cisco Catalyst® Series 1900, 2900, 2900 XL, 3500 XL, 5500, 4000, and 6500, the Cisco PIX® Firewall, and the Cisco 2500, 3600, 4000, AS5300, and 7200 Series."

The Products in Action

IDHS is currently using CiscoWorks LAN Management Solution (LMS) 2.0 as their preferred management application for Cisco devices, and they use the Multi-Router Traffic Grapher (MRTG) for long-term traffic trending.

CiscoWorks Resource Manager Essentials (RME), a software application in the LMS bundle, provides the functionality that Carter and his co-workers use most often. LMS has made asset management much simpler. In Carter's words, "With so many devices, keeping track of device location used to be a real problem. We would install inventory tag numbers in all devices and would constantly have to retrieve this information for the Asset Management group, which was far too demanding on our time. Using LMS instead has helped us tremendously in cleaning up our asset management process." Carter and his team have imbedded location codes into the device configuration and can now easily determine physical location by running a report in RME.

"By using the SWIM function in CiscoWorks RME to upgrade Cisco IOS software, it now takes only 8 hours of regular time—thus saving us 92 hours of work every time a major software update comes out."

—Bill Carter
CCIE—Sentinel Technologies
On-site Senior Network Analyst
Illinois Department of Human Services

IDHS has also found considerable return on investment using the Software Image Manager (SWIM) tool within RME. Carter explains, "In the past, when we needed to upgrade the operating system on Cisco devices it would often take several weeks and a large amount of overtime. Now we schedule software updates to run at night. After a few days, all the updates are completed with no overtime. This also eliminated the inevitable user errors when manual updates were run." At IDHS, SWIM provides a series of GUIs allowing the operator to schedule operating system upgrades on both Cisco routers and switches. The RME software then automates the actual process of using Trivial File Transfer Protocol (TFTP) to push a new image to the device.

Carter quantifies the impact on IDHS's bottom line: "When we had to update the Cisco IOS® Software on 500 Catalyst 2900 XL switches manually it used to take about 100 man hours, 75 percent of which was overtime. By using the SWIM function in CiscoWorks RME, it now takes only 8 hours of regular time, thus saving us 92 hours of work every time a major software update comes out." Overall, CiscoWorks LMS has fulfilled the time-savings and resource savings needs for the Illinois Department of Human Services.



Corporate Headquarters
Cisco Systems, Inc.
170 West Tasman Drive
San Jose, CA 95134-1706
USA
www.cisco.com
Tel: 408 526-4000
800 553-NETS (6387)
Fax: 408 526-4100

European Headquarters
Cisco Systems Europe
11 Rue Camille Desmoulins
92782 Issy-les-Moulineaux
Cedex 9
France
www-europe.cisco.com
Tel: 33 1 58 04 60 00
Fax: 33 1 58 04 61 00

Americas Headquarters
Cisco Systems, Inc.
170 West Tasman Drive
San Jose, CA 95134-1706
USA
www.cisco.com
Tel: 408 526-7660
Fax: 408 527-0883

Asia Pacific Headquarters
Cisco Systems, Inc.
Capital Tower
168 Robinson Road
#22-01 to #29-01
Singapore 068912
www.cisco.com
Tel: +65 317 7777
Fax: +65 317 7799

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