

Vancouver Radiologists Centralizes Event Log Archiving and Performance Monitoring with ELM



Company Profile

Vancouver Radiologists, P.C. has been providing full-spectrum professional diagnostic imaging services to the residents of greater Vancouver, WA and Portland, OR for 36 years. Their Radiologists are dedicated to providing patient focused care in a comfortable outpatient setting. Vancouver Radiologists offers state-of-the-art technology and quality medical imaging services.

Vancouver Radiologists is an ACR (American College of Radiology) accredited facility. Their facilities have been recognized for the achievement of high practice standards after a peer-review evaluation of its practice. Image quality and procedure evaluations are conducted by board-certified radiologists and medical physicists who are experts in the field.

IT Department Duties

The IT department at Vancouver Radiologists manages the IT infrastructure across 5 facilities encompassing approximately 100 workstations, 30 servers, and numerous medical devices. Their goal is to provide the company with a safe, secure, and reliable computing environment and IT infrastructure with minimal if any disruptions. With only two Network Administrators and a Health Information & Technology Director they rely heavily on their ability to quickly and proactively respond to issues. Any downtime greatly interferes with the high volume of patient studies they receive daily. The IT staff is required to be knowledgeable not only on common IT systems (Microsoft Active Directory, Exchange, PBX systems, networking configuration), but also manage imaging modalities and medical devices. Their department includes individuals with certifications including MCSE, CCNA, CSSA, and CISSP.

Technology Challenge

It is extremely difficult to manage numerous servers efficiently and effectively without the proper tools. Manually checking all event logs, as well as saving log files, and archiving is a daunting task.

Without an automated system, a full-time employee could be dedicated to these routine and redundant tasks. For Vancouver Radiologists and many other companies, this is the reason that a server management solution is so valuable.

Objective

The objective of their server monitoring project was to find a product that would support five critical needs.

◆ Up/Down Alerting

With a very distributed network and multiple locations, having up/down alerting on servers and network devices with the ability to send alerts to an email and/or pager was crucial.

◆ Event Log Alerting/Archiving/Reporting

When a server has an error message in the event logs, they needed to react as quickly as possible to resolve the problem. For example, in regards to security they needed to be able to see if someone is targeting one of their domain controllers with multiple logon attempts (aka. brute force attack).

◆ Performance Base-lining/Monitoring

The ability to centrally manage/view performance metrics for all their servers in order to prevent bottlenecks and minimize threats to productivity. Scheduled reporting was extremely important.

◆ IIS log parsing

Vancouver Radiologists has multiple Web Servers, and the proposed solution required the ability to parse IIS logs when the need arose.

◆ HIPAA Compliance

As a healthcare facility, Vancouver Radiologists has to abide by HIPAA laws. In order to do this, it is absolutely necessary to have a solution to track activity, generate reports, and prove compliance.

Review and Evaluation

During the evaluation process **Lake Johnson, Network Administrator**, evaluated 15 different solutions ranging from open source products, to expensive dedicated appliances. Once the solutions were narrowed down that fit within their budget and still

potentially met their needs, he started testing trial versions of software from several different vendors.

“The first solution I evaluated is actually a vendor that we are currently a customer of for a network monitor product. I installed the module for Event Log analyzing, and tested it for a few days. I soon realized that their event log product was similar to their network monitor product... Cheap, and partially gets the job done, but we would probably end up having to babysit it to keep it working. Another factor with this product that was very disappointing was the company’s support/sales team responsiveness. I submitted multiple requests with licensing/pricing questions as well as support inquiries, and the average response time was two days.”

Lake installed two more products the next day spending only a few hours each before uninstalling them, and another was ruled out a few hours later. According to Lake, “Both of these products did not work as advertised and the user interface was a challenge to navigate; a real hassle.”

Evaluations of monitoring solutions continued for over a month with the remaining products all having similar, adverse outcomes. The software that was at a reasonable price point for Vancouver Radiologists to be within budget was either not intuitive enough, didn’t meet all of their needs, or didn’t work as advertised. And at the other end of the spectrum, “The higher end solutions looked really nice, but the \$30,000 to \$50,000 price tags could not be justified,” commented Lake.

The Solution

“When I first looked at TNT Software’s website, I was encouraged that their ELM product was capable of meeting all of our objectives, but still a bit skeptical from all the previous evaluations I had done. I went ahead and downloaded the trial version of the ELM Enterprise Manager software and had it up and running within an hour. I found the MMC style user interface to be very easy to use. The application is very intuitive and I could see how the granularity/flexibility was going to be extremely valuable. I went ahead and started adding some of my servers, and was thrilled to see that

after completing the Agent Deployment Wizard I had all of my objectives for the project right in front of me, fully functional. At this point we realized that ELM met all of our needs, plus provided even more monitoring features we could use, but still at a reasonable price.”

Shortly after getting ELM installed Lake received a call from a TNT Software Account Manager. “He was able to answer all my questions, give me a customized price quote for our environment, and even setup a demo on our first call.”

The next step in the process was viewing the ELM product demo with the other staff in the IT department. “The engineer that presented the product to us was extremely knowledgeable and was able to answer all of our questions.

“As a side-by-side test we unplugged a non-critical server. Within seconds ELM notified us both by pager and by email that the system was not responding. Our old monitoring tool never sent an alert...”

ELM Enterprise Manager is now running in a full production environment. Deployment was very smooth and it has made the lives of the IT staff at Vancouver Radiologists much easier.

This project was initiated with five goals in mind, and ELM solved each one of these objectives.

Up/Down alerting — “ELM has a ping monitor that probes my servers, and I was able to setup notification rules to alert us via email or pager. ELM is now monitoring all of our servers as well as routers and switches for up/down status. As a side-by-side test with our old solution we

unplugged a non critical server and within seconds ELM notified us via email and pager that the system was not responding. The system was left offline for at least 5 minutes. Our old monitoring tool never sent an alert...”

Event Log Alerting/Archiving/Reporting — “ELM has very flexible alerting functionality for any and all event logs, including Syslogs and SNMP. We also have archive databases configured in case we ever need to access them in the future. ELM Editor and Publisher easily support all of my HIPAA compliance reporting needs with both the preconfigured and custom reporting capabilities. Now we are collecting events and automatically rolling over databases monthly, keeping 6 months worth on hand and pushing the rest to a storage device. ELM provides easy to access to archive databases if we need to run reports from them which is great since we have to keep a total of seven years on hand.”

Performance Base-lining/Monitoring — “I am now able to centrally manage, monitor, and report on the performance of my servers across all our locations with ELM. Our performance reports are setup to run weekly for all servers and we’re actively monitoring network, disk space, memory usage, and CPU utilization. And this took only about 5-10 minutes to setup!”

IIS log parsing — “Although we have not had to implement this yet, ELM is capable of parsing IIS log files from our multiple web servers when the need arises.”

HIPAA Compliance — “This one is huge for us. We are able to archive all of the information that passes through our servers in archive databases. This gives us the flexibility to go back 3 years from now if the need were to arise, and pull pertinent data to analyze.”

“The ELM Publisher reporting suite is of extremely high value to us. There are built in Security Reports that capture data that we need to abide by HIPAA laws, as well as the flexibility of building custom reports with ELM Editor for any other information that we may want to mine and document.”

Overall Experience

Vancouver Radiologists found that after dedicating just a few hours to learning ELM together with a demonstration to walk them through the product, that they were ready to be off and running. Being able to access on-line video tutorials has also proven to be a great way to get up to speed on other features of the product and to provide quick answers to questions that have come up along the way.

“We love the open design and flexibility of ELM, collecting everything out of the box, so we can see what it can do and then fine tune it to do exactly what we want instead of fighting with out-of-the-box configurations that are so limited and locked down,” says Lake.

“Overall we’re very happy with TNT Software. They have been one of the most responsive, fast and friendly software vendors we’ve ever worked with.”

In the end, Vancouver Radiologists came to a very simple and straightforward conclusion. According to Lake, “There are no surprises or ‘gotchas’ with ELM – It performs as advertised out-of-the-box, which we found to be pretty rare with a lot of the monitoring solutions we had researched. It makes the job of any system administrator or network administrator a lot easier.”



“The ability to take a view on the screen, like Audit Logon Failures, and drag and drop it to ELM Editor to instantly create a report is just awesome.”

ELM Enterprise
Manager

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