

USC Marshall Uses Verdiem to Cut Energy Costs and Improve IT Efficiency

Centralized Management and Wake-on-WAN Increase Control of PCs and Macs



When the chief information officer for the Marshall School of Business at the University of Southern California recently implemented a sustainability initiative at the school, Network Engineer Brian Wood saw an opportunity for an IT energy management solution that also would improve IT efficiency.

"Yes, we had the green initiative, but that wasn't the only selling point for a new solution," notes Wood, who works in USC Marshall's Information Technology Architecture for Academic Information Services. "We were looking for a product that would benefit the IT department and the overall organization."

Wood's team needed a tool that would provide central management for desktop computers used by more than 5,000 users while meeting the CIO's mission to be more "green." He knew right where to look. Several years previously at another job, Wood had worked with Verdiem.

Verdiem Surveyor is the industry's most advanced solution for IT energy management, helping enterprises control and reduce energy used by PCs and Macs on their networks without negatively impacting end users or IT. Wood knew it was the next logical step for USC Marshall.

"One of Verdiem's selling points for USC Marshall was that it offered a centrally managed solution," said Wood. "Another key piece was its Wake-on-WAN solution that extends Wake-on-LAN technology by providing a reliable and practical method for waking computers over a large organization."

A key IT role -- particularly for the desktop team -- is to manage PCs and Macs for updates. At universities, where faculty and staff remotely access the server at all hours of the day, this proves challenging. Having a machine go to a low power state at night when a user may want

remote access was a concern for USC Marshall. Verdiem's Wake-on-Wan solution allowed the IT team at USC Marshall to address this concern.

Verdiem's Wake-On-Wan technology enhances standard Wake-On-LAN capabilities and minimizes network traffic and security issues to more effectively allow USC Marshall to centrally wake remote systems. The Verdiem Surveyor server delegates wake responsibilities to proxy systems on each subnet. Using these wake proxies, systems can be controlled without network broadcasts. This allows IT teams to schedule all the activities, or perform emergency activities in an ad hoc manner across complex enterprise network topologies. The Verdiem solution also allows IT to overcome Windows sleep disorders, and it prevents data loss with application handling and custom scripting.

With Surveyor's proven reliability, USC Marshall moved forward to implement the software. It now uses Surveyor's Wake-on-WAN feature for its monthly maintenance period for its desktop computers. The team wakes all computers up at 3 a.m. to install the patches. The school also has schedules for its lab computers, which are rebooted daily. Previously, it was not easy to change the schedules using a group policy. But Wood notes that Surveyor has dramatically improved that function.

"Using Surveyor, I make the change and the policy takes effect almost immediately," he said. "The centrally managed component is the most powerful piece of Surveyor. The green initiative is great. The money savings are great. But what it comes down to is that Surveyor makes it easier to manage the actual up times of your desktops."

He noted Surveyor actually helped USC Marshall find a number of issues it had with computers connecting to the network and helped troubleshoot desktop problems. "If computers aren't connecting properly, they may not get the installation files or policy updates," said Wood. "When our computers weren't connecting properly to the Verdiem software, it was a troubleshooting mechanism for us to figure out the desktop or networking issue."

"One of Verdiem's key premises is that we help IT do their job better," said John Scumniotales, president and CEO of Verdiem. "We are providing solutions that go beyond energy efficiency or PC power management. We're helping IT become more efficient overall."

USC Marshall continues to benefit from Verdiem's IT efficiency. "By just having the computer taken down to a lower power state, there are a lot of benefits that come into play," said Wood. "It saves on wear and tear on computers, which increases the lifespan of computers. It also reduces overhead costs because we don't have guys running around to replace computers. And without parts constantly spinning and generating heat, we also save on air conditioning costs."

Surveyor 5.5, which includes support for the Mac operating system, enabled USC Marshall to extend the solution throughout the entire school, providing a 32 percent reduction in annual energy costs. In addition, USC Marshall was able to recoup its initial investment in one month with the help of an energy rebate from LA Dept. of Water and Power.

"This measure is helping propel the business school toward its 2012 goal of 80 percent energy savings overall," said Wood. "In addition, we're assisting the entire University of Southern California with implementing Verdiem."

About USC Marshall

Consistently ranked among the nation's premier schools, USC Marshall is internationally recognized for its emphasis on entrepreneurship, innovation, social responsibility and ground-breaking research. Located in the heart of Los Angeles, USC Marshall offers its 5,500-plus undergraduate and graduate students a unique world view and impressive global experimental opportunities. With an alumni network spanning more than 90 countries, USC Marshall's students join a worldwide community of thought leaders who are redefining the way business works. For more information, visit www.marshall.usc.edu [1].

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[1] <http://www.marshall.usc.edu>