

Case Study

Nelson Mullins

Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP

For more than a century, Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough has been serving the legal needs of an expanding clientele and has grown to become a prestigious national law firm with diverse areas of practice. As a top 150 law firm, Nelson Mullins found mounting evidence that it was rapidly outgrowing its manual desktop management processes. Nelson Mullins turned to Prism Suite™ from New Boundary Technologies® to make the case for automating desktop configuration management and software deployment.

Background:

Growth always has its challenges, and that was true for the IT department of Nelson Mullins. As the firm's IT environment grew, it managed those added workstations and servers by adding more administrative staff. But as the environment expanded to include hundreds of desktop and servers, and hundreds of software applications to manage across ten offices, more staff and manual methods soon proved to be too cumbersome, intrusive and costly.

Challenge:

According to LaMonte Tandy, IT Applications Manager for Nelson Mullins, before Prism Suite the firm handled nearly all of its software deployment manually via the old-fashioned sneaker-net. Nelson Mullins sent administrators to each workstation, laptop and server to install and update software applications, one at a time. "There essentially was no deployment solution," says Tandy. "For the most part, installations were done manually, either by going to the workstation in question or getting on the workstation remotely and following installation instructions. The logon script was sometimes used to push certain changes, but most software installations were performed by hand."

Environment:

Nelson Mullins has a Windows environment with Windows XP workstations and predominantly Windows 2003 servers. The firm manages 1,200 workstations and 105 servers in a distributed environment that covers ten offices in South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, Massachusetts and Washington, DC.

Organization:

Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough
Columbia, South Carolina

Profile:

With a strong Southeastern base, Nelson Mullins has grown into a national law firm with a strong reputation in meeting the complex litigation, corporate, securities, finance, employment, regulatory and other needs for clients ranging from private individuals to large businesses, including many publicly held companies.

Situation:

With more than 1,200 workstations and 100 servers in 10 office locations, manual software deployment and desktop management tasks were becoming too slow, too intrusive, and too costly.

Solution:

Nelson Mullins selected Prism Deploy® to automate software deployment across its entire environment. The firm has managed to save \$52,500 per year, dramatically improve efficiency, and redirect IT resources to more strategic purposes.

Quote:

"The most pronounced benefit of implementing Prism Deploy is the time it has saved us installing software. We had very cumbersome, time-consuming, and often inaccurate methods before and now software installation takes up much less of our time and resources."

– LaMonte Tandy
IT Applications Manager

Solution:

Having made the decision to automate desktop management, the Nelson Mullins IT staff began evaluating competing solutions from a variety of vendors, with a primary focus on software deployment. But it didn't take long for the department to come to the conclusion that Prism Suite stood out as the best choice for their needs. "The value, ease of use, and reliability of Prism Suite quickly made us give up on the other competing products," Tandy



says. "It was very clear from the beginning that Prism Suite directly met our needs."

Result:

Using Prism Deploy and the power of its unique configuration groups (dynamic, self-populating computer groups based on administrator-defined configuration traits) Nelson Mullins has fully automated its software deployment processes and achieved significant benefits in time and money saved. In addition to the impressive savings, Nelson Mullins also now has a virtual set-and-forget software distribution environment throughout its distributed network.

"We often package applications with the Prism Deploy Editor, which is an amazingly easy tool to use," says Tandy. "It does a great job of picking up only the changes we want, so the time spent modifying the package after it has been created is greatly reduced."

While Tandy touts the powerful packaging technology in Prism Deploy, he's equally impressed by Prism Suite's simplicity. "The ease of use and reliability are definitely the biggest benefits," he says. "The secondary uses of Prism have also been a great help. The ability to edit the tools menu allows us to do more of our work from one place. The reporting features and all of the information Prism tracks help greatly with troubleshooting and fact finding. And configuration groups keep us apprised of any undesirable issues cropping up in our environment."

Nelson Mullins' IT department makes extensive use of configuration groups to deliver software with pinpoint accuracy anywhere in the organization.

Once they determine the best way to automate a particular installation, the staff targets individuals and groups of computers, depending on the scope of the deployment.

"The organizational groups in Prism are great for quickly setting up groups of computers when you have a definite list of workstations," says Tandy. "But more interesting, and usually more powerful, are the configuration groups. These make so many parts of distributions so simple. Being able to deploy software based on about any part of the state of a workstation is invaluable."

Nelson Mullins has many configuration groups in common use, which enable the precise targeting of software based on virtually any configuration parameter like office location, Active Directory group, software versions, even registry keys. As Tandy explains, "Once the configuration groups are set up and the tasks assigned, there is no need to do anything else, even if new computers hit the original configuration group as they come online."

While the Nelson Mullins IT team has been impressed with Prism Suite's powerful features and easy user experience, it also has high praise for the quality of New Boundary Technologies' customer support.

"The first line of support we receive on the phone is extremely helpful with all of our needs and goes out of their way to help us with questions," says Tandy. "It is rare to find such friendly, knowledgeable help, and utilizing it has saved us quite a bit of time and frustration."



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