



Case Study

Adam Abell
Senior Systems Programmer
Shepherd Center

Summary:

At the Shepherd Center in Atlanta, GA, (<http://www.shepherd.org/>) more than 850 patients per year check in to receive medical treatment and participate in research and rehabilitation for spinal cord injuries, acquired brain injuries, multiple sclerosis, chronic pain and other neurological conditions. Founded in 1975, the center is ranked among the top 10 best rehabilitation hospitals in the nation by U.S. News & World Report and publishes up to 50 research projects annually.

With over 1,000 employees and email servers spread out in several different buildings, keeping this enterprise medical facility's IT infrastructure running smoothly takes countless man hours and steady maintenance. However, for Adam Abell and presumably every other Shepherd Center employee, no aspect of their work is more important than patient care. In Adam's case, an hour of email downtime doesn't necessarily mean a loss in revenue for the organization as it would for most enterprise companies. At the Shepherd Center, downtime could mean a medical chart might not get updated in time or a procedure might not be documented properly.



As Adam says, "**patients come first.**" And in his opinion, GSX's email monitoring software does more than create a stable environment for his IT staff; it helps insure doctors, nurses and other staff members can communicate efficiently and therefore adequately care for patients who deserve the best medical attention possible.

The IT Architecture:

Adam's team consists of a staff of approximately 16 employees (roughly one staff member per 120 employees) and someone from his team is always on call at the Shepherd Center. As for the IT set-up, the Shepherd Center has a dedicated inbound/outbound SMTP server and two clustered mail servers that host the user mail files. "I also have two main application Domino servers, a Sametime server, a BES server, a server for LEI, two external web servers for community-based applications, and a test server," Adam says. The servers are also spread out in several buildings across the 120-bed facility.

The Challenge:

With relatively few staff members and a system that allowed only Adam, the most senior IT representative, access to server statuses, the Shepherd Center IT department was in dire need of a comprehensive monitoring tool.

"The sheer number of servers and platforms made monitoring difficult," Adam says.

Before switching to GSX Monitoring software, Adam used the default Lotus Notes Admin Client, which he says provided okay tools for monitoring but did not have robust enough options and required

admin rights to use and configure – rights to which only Adam had access. With this setup, monitoring took up too much of Adam’s time and the monitoring process was not shared with the rest of Adam’s staff.

The Requirements:

With multiple servers located across several areas of the Shepherd Center facility, Adam needed a monitoring tool that was easy to set up, easy to use, and provided the rest of his staff the ability to view monitoring data without administrative rights.

“Ease of installation, multi-platform capabilities, and low cost were our primary goals when searching for a monitoring tool,” Adam says.



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Why GSX:

Originally, Adam experimented with an Open Source monitoring tool before deciding on GSX. After realizing that the Open Source tool did not work to the level needed and that it was not easy to use or monitor, Adam made the decision to install GSX Monitor V9. Ultimately, the decision came down to GSX’s easy configuration and rich features.

“As the Domino server administrator, GSX Monitor has helped ease my workload by automating many of the admin tasks for preventive maintenance and server monitoring,” Adam says. “I also have it set up so that any IT staff member can pull up the remote monitor when they need to know at a glance how the environment is running.”

The GSX Experience:

Adam says he has had a great experience with GSX Solutions so far and has been impressed with the monitoring tool. The few times he has had to ask support a question, they were fast and friendly.

“A healthy well monitored environment will no doubt prove to be more stable and cause less downtime for my organization to deal with,” he says.

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About Shepherd Center

Shepherd Center is a private, not-for-profit hospital devoted to the medical care and rehabilitation of people with spinal cord injury and disease, acquired brain injury, multiple sclerosis and other neuromuscular problems.

Based in Atlanta, Shepherd Center has been helping people through some of the most difficult and life-changing experiences they can imagine for more than three decades.

Each year the Center admits hundreds of patients and conducts thousands of outpatient clinic visits.

By focusing on highly-specialized care, Shepherd Center has developed a unique expertise and has become a nationally respected model for rehabilitation.

As a leading facility for research, as well as an organization that sets the standards for rehabilitative outcomes, Shepherd Center helps shape the face of rehabilitation in the United States. Whether studying a new device, testing an improved surgical procedure or developing a groundbreaking treatment method, research at Shepherd Center translates directly into an improved quality of life for our patients.