

Press Release

Australian software company keeps US Internet school online

Sydney, September 16, 2003 – The Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow (ECOT), an Internet-only school, is keeping 5,000 public school children online with PROGNOSIS systems management software from Sydney-based software company Integrated Research (IR).

ECOT is a statewide, not-for-profit, computer-enhanced community school providing the first and only secure home-based education for grades K-12 in the US state of Ohio.

“As a not-for-profit organisation we have to be very mindful of our expenses and at the same time be in a position to provide the best possible service for a quality education,” says Glen Fickle, IT Manager at ECOT.

“The viability and success of the service depends on our systems working reliably and economically, so we can address any problems before they can affect our students, while keeping our operational and purchasing costs down.”

ECOT consulted Xerox Global Services, a division of Xerox International, to find a suitable management solution for its mission-critical Windows servers. The servers host ECOT’s intranet, which carries the firewall-secured service.

The ability for ECOT and Xerox engineers to monitor different parts of the network from different geographic locations in real-time was a key requirement.

“Because ECOT provides a Web-only service, real-time availability metrics for the Windows servers and applications (such as Exchange, IIS, Active Directory, and SQL) were imperative for preventing service failures,” says Steve Seiter, Managing Principal at Xerox Global Services.

“The complex and distributed nature of the network — students are able to access the service statewide — also means that our engineers must be able to monitor and troubleshoot specific network points wherever problems may have occurred.”

Why PROGNOSIS?

PROGNOSIS was selected after Xerox Global Services had already conducted trials with other products; the technical staff were particularly impressed with its ability to monitor the ECOT network in real-time. While the other products are developed using older agent/manager architectures — information must be polled to a central server before it can be analysed — PROGNOSIS’ peer-to-peer architecture delivers information from the source without delay.

“We wanted the flexibility to monitor across the network, or to isolate groups of students, and even watch individual machines,” says Seiter. “PROGNOSIS allows us to drill-down from the high-level, network-wide view of the system to individual components in real-time, with a few clicks of the mouse, and with no system overhead penalty.”

ECOT also wanted to have real-time access to the number of student connections to gather detailed metrics on access times and peak usage periods during the day.

“This type of historical data helps us to better understand infrastructure growth requirements for suitable capacity planning. Since PROGNOSIS stores its information, we lose none of the advantages of being able to generate flexible ad-hoc reports at any time.”

PROGNOSIS is currently used to manage 16 Windows servers, although ECOT is developing plans to expand the model to other parts of the US. The ability for PROGNOSIS to monitor over a WAN was factored into the buying decision, and is a fundamental requirement for a nationwide service.

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For more information on ECOT, visit <http://www.ecotohio.org>. Information on PROGNOSIS can be found at <http://www.ir.com/prognosis>

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