JP1
One Simplicity

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Hitachi JP1 solutions enhance desktop management, boost software governance and compliance, improve end-user and IT productivity

Part of the SEIKO Epson Group, Epson Singapore is a leader in digital imaging. Using Hitachi JP1/Software Distribution and Hitachi JP1/Asset Information Manager and Hitachi JP1/Software Distribution, the company has achieved an up-to-date, highly manageable and visible desktop environment, improved software governance and enhanced end-user support.

A wholly owned subsidiary of the Seiko Epson Corporation, Japan, Epson Singapore Pte. Ltd. was established in 1982 as Epson Electronics (Singapore) Pte Ltd to sell and market Epson imaging and printing products in Southeast Asia. Today, its offices host the regional headquarters for ASEAN and South Asia; and the product portfolio has expanded to include personal and business printers, scanners, LCD projectors, Point-of-Sale (POS) systems and electronic component devices.

Epson Singapore has a 'customers first' policy and this is reflected in its attainment of ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 certification in November 1997 and March 2000, respectively. While the company is known for providing its customers with products of excellent quality that create true value for them, in 2007, it found itself needing to make improvements in how desktop IT assets were managed. That year, external auditors had highlighted the need for greater control over software assets. A separate audit exercise by internal auditors made the same observation-that software control needed to be tightened.

At that time, the proper use of equipment and software governance were policed using point-in-time 'snapshots' of individual machines by members of the IT team, said See Tho Wai Loon, Department Head, Information System Support Department, Information System Division. Besides requiring substantial IT man-hours, this approach was difficult to apply, especially considering that more than 90% of end-users use portable computers that are easily taken out of the physical corporate environment.

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>
> *Yoshihiro Usui*
> *Division Head – Information Systems Division*

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> *See Tho wai Loon*
> *Department Head Information System Support Department*

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Wanted: Efficiency at Desktop Level

At about the same time, there was a move towards centralisation in the IT area, with corporate headquarters in Japan serving as a reference for compliance and governance matters. Epson Singapore saw in this an opportunity to housekeep its 800-user desktop environment across Asia South.

Besides reining in downloading and use of disallowed software, the company also wanted more efficiency in the areas of software distribution and asset management, said Mr. See Tho. While client PCs were standardised software-wise on Microsoft XP and Microsoft Office and these were kept up-to-date by Windows Server Update Services, other applications were patched manually.

"Updates and patches were performed PC by PC, with the end-user interrupted from one to two hours each time. Given that we're primarily a sales organisation and that users are physically distributed, it was difficult to schedule time slots convenient for both the end-user and IT staff members tasked with keeping client software current."

Typically some form of software patching was required each month, with each round taking from one to two months to be completed considering the mobility of sales personnel. As can be imagined, this adversely affected user productivity, besides imposing a high administrative burden on the Information System Support Department.

Asset management was equally challenging. Twice a year, these checks were performed only on sample pools of users, so there was no clarity on what applications were installed on a particular computer, which applications were shared and by whom, and so on. Via paper-based tracking, not real-time and inaccuracies arise after users switched functions.This made it difficult for the Information System Support Department to locate the software when end-users requested help with their applications.

Hitachi JP1 a Clear Choice

Clearly, Epson Singapore's desktop environment needed to be made more manageable that it was and a decision was made in early 2009 to implement a solution that could address its challenges. With the capability to address the auditors' concerns at the top of its wish-list, the Information System Support Department set out looking for a solution that could meet its requirements. It shortlisted two products, got the vendors to conduct proof-of-concept (POC) demos, and eventually selected two components of the Hitachi Job Management Partner 1 suite of systems management solutions: Hitachi JP1/Software Distribution (Hitachi JP1/SD) and Hitachi JP1/Asset Information Manager (Hitachi JP1/AIM).

Needs	Solution	Benefits
■ Improve software governance ■ Reduce man-hours spent on software distribution and client asset inventorising and management ■ Avoid loss of productive end-user time ■ Improve end-user support	■ Automated distribution and installation of client software by Hitachi JP1/SD ■ Automated collection of detailed client information by Hitachi JP1/AIM ■ Remote end-user support	■ Software governance meets internal and external auditors' requirements ■ Patch/update distribution is now fully automated ■ Client asset inventorizing is done automatically on a daily basis ■ Automated software distribution and asset inventorizing incur zero end-user downtime ■ Helpdesk support provided remotely, 10-15% reduction in helpdesk requests ■ Low administrative overhead frees IT team for value-added tasks

"We selected Hitachi JP1 primarily for its ease of use. Navigation is very user-friendly, making the software easy to learn and use without much training. Hitachi clearly had users in mind when it designed JP1. The core is solid but the interface is very intuitive," said Mr. See Tho.

Other factors that won the deal for Hitachi included cost-effectiveness, reports that are easy for non-IT personnel (including auditors and accountants) to interpret, high degree of automation, and the ability to allow Epson Singapore to manage by exception.

"Implementation was fuss-free, with no hiccups. Buy-in from the country IT teams was very strong and we managed to loop in all the countries in a single session. It helped that the Hitachi consultant who worked with us on the implementation was very experienced."

Broad Range of Benefits

With the two Hitachi JP1 solutions in place, updates and patches are now pushed out to users as they become available and stocktaking of client assets is done when the user logs into the corporate network at the start of the work-day. Both these processes are transparent to users, who no longer need to have their work interrupted and are now more aware of the need to keep the desktop uncontaminated. As for the company's auditors they were, in the first quarter of 2010, "pleasantly surprised" by the new ability to track both software and hardware assets.

The high degree of automation inherent in the Hitachi JP1 solutions has also reduced the burden on the IT team, which has also been trimmed. The time being saved is now invested in projects that deliver more value than performing manual software updates and troubleshooting at the user's desk. In addition, each team member now has a wider set of skills, including soft ones.

Other form of usage that was subsequently deployed was using JP1 to launch the Epson Singapore Screensaver. The screensaver platform is uniform deploy news and updates and events to all desktops.

Subsequent roadmap is to utilize JP1 for portable storage devices in tightening the security environment for information exchanges between users and external parties.

"Force Multiplier"

"Overall, we see Hitachi JP1 as a force multiplier. For example, our managing director was using Internet Explorer to access Google Maps but didn't manage to do it. IT traced the problem to a missing Microsoft patch. What we did was put the patch in JP1 and pushed it out to everyone. So, in the end, every one of our users benefited from the resolution of what was initially just one person's problem," said Mr. See Tho.

Clearly satisfied with its Hitachi JP1 solutions – and with ROI projections on track – Epson Singapore will be recommending them to its sister companies in the Epson stable. It will also be taking a closer look at how other Hitachi JP1 solutions, in particular, Automatic Job Management System and Performance Manager, can help it enhance its enterprise application and server management operations.

About Epson Singapore

A subsidiary of the Seiko Epson Corporation, Epson Singapore is the regional headquarters for the company's ASEAN and South Asian markets, where it operates an 18-country network responsible for delivering and supporting Epson's cutting-edge consumer and business digital imaging products to customers in the region.
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