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Lorrayne Smith
Distributed Systems Team Leader
KCOM Group

Keeping Computers Connected at KCOM Group

How the communications firm implemented Absolute® Software's Computrace® to track its best assets

The KCOM Group provides a range of communications services to organisations and consumers across the UK. The Group is listed on the London Stock Exchange. With 2,000 employees working across nine different locations, keeping track of IT hardware assets such as laptops and desktops is difficult at best. At worst, it becomes a drain on company resources and a big security risk.

To lease or not to lease?

In 2008, the Group's IT team took the decision to refresh the company's IT estate, which included 1,100 laptops and 900 desktops. The team chose to lease the hardware, rather than buy it outright.

Leasing is a common choice when it comes to the acquisition of new corporate hardware. The main advantage is that the cost is spread throughout the lifecycle of the hardware and it allowed the Group to refresh a bigger proportion of its estate.

The other element to leasing agreements is that the company doing the leasing does not have full ownership of the hardware and at the end of the contract must return the hardware to the vendor. As a result, the IT team at KCOM Group had to take extra care tracking the whereabouts of their IT assets – particularly as laptops are more prone to being lost or stolen, both from inside and outside the company.

Keeping an eye on your assets

To better manage the leased hardware, the Group's IT team decided that Computrace, an IT asset management, data protection, and computer theft recovery solution from Absolute Software, should be activated on all new computers. "We always knew that if we decided to lease, there would come a time when all of our IT assets would need to be managed centrally," said Lorrayne Smith, Distributed Systems Team Leader at KCOM Group. The IT team was impressed by how easy Computrace is to use and how quickly it located missing laptops.

"Keeping track of employees' laptops can be a nightmare in terms of administration and organisation, and that's before you've made allowances for human error. No matter how hard you try, it is inevitable that laptops will occasionally be misplaced," Lorrayne continued. Computrace is able to pinpoint a laptop's location as soon as it connects to the Internet, so KCOM Group is now able to quickly identify a missing machine and know precisely where it can be retrieved from.

The Computrace Agent is installed in the laptop's firmware at the time of manufacture. Once the Agent is activated by a company's IT administrator, they can access information about the laptop's whereabouts, the software installed, and user information via the secure web-based Absolute Customer Centre. This information is regularly updated as the Agent 'checks in' with the Absolute Monitoring Centre every 24 hours.

Absolute®
COMPUTRACE

Reaping the benefits

'PC drift' can be a big problem: when people leave the company or computers simply change locations internally, the IT team is often the last to know. Within KCOM Group, the team minimises PC drift by using information obtained from the Absolute Customer Centre to determine when a computer has not been used for some time. Computrace asset tracking capabilities allow the team to locate and retrieve the computer that is no longer needed, so it can be redistributed elsewhere.

"For example, we had a challenge when engineers would be sent a replacement laptop if they had a fault. Sometimes it could take a long time for the faulty laptop to be returned once the engineer had a working laptop," stated Lorrayne.

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The team implemented Computrace as new computers were purchased over a period of approximately six months. "Needless to say, the new computers went down extremely well with employees," continued Lorrayne. "However, what's made the biggest difference to the IT team has been the ability to find out exactly what hardware is out there and who is using it."

About Absolute Computrace

Absolute Computrace by Absolute Software allows organisations to centrally track and secure their IT assets within a single cloud-based console – the Absolute Customer Centre. They can easily identify computers and ultra-portable devices that have gone missing, enforce software policies, and maintain a fleet of optimally running devices. Most importantly, they can remotely invoke preemptive or reactive security measures to safeguard each device and the data it contains.

About Absolute Software

Absolute Software is the global leader in firmware-embedded persistent endpoint security and management solutions.

We provide organisations with comprehensive visibility and control over all of their endpoints – regardless of user or location. Our customers are able to optimise productivity, reduce operating costs, prove compliance, and remotely secure all of their devices and the corporate data they contain.



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