

Presbyterian Church Saves One FTE with More Efficient Patching



Profile:

Presbyterian Church (USA) provides centralized leadership for the country's 10,425 churches. An IT team of three supports 440 employees.

Industry:

Religious

Network:

- 450 Windows PCs
- 50 Windows servers
- Two locations

Solutions:

- Ivanti Patch for Windows

Key Benefits:

- Easier server patch management frees half of the work-week for two people, saving the equivalent of one full-time employee.
- PCUSA reduced PC updates from 8-10 days to 4 ½ hours.
- IT staff can focus on other projects and help desk support for employees.
- PC updates happen daily and server updates are deployed at least a week faster than before, closing a major vulnerability gap.

The Presbyterian Church took root in America in 1703, and since then has grown to 10,425 churches across the United States. Based in Louisville, Kentucky, Presbyterian Church (USA) employs 650 people and serves as the governing body for U.S. Presbyterian churches.

Challenge: Vulnerabilities Impact the Network

As with any nonprofit organization, leaner operations leave more resources for the primary mission. At Presbyterian Church, network and PC engineers work diligently to support employees and keep the infrastructure secure.

Software patching is critical to keeping systems and employees operating productively, but until a few years ago it was a major struggle for the organization to stay current. The patching solution the church used was so inadequate that the team ultimately had to patch manually much of the time. Monthly patch management took at least a week and a half, and still, the organization wasn't covered as well as it should be.

"Patching was so difficult, it probably would have been easier to just do Windows updates and pick out our own patches," said Randy Bowman, Network Analyst II, Information Technology, Presbyterian Church (USA). "As it was, we found vulnerabilities too late and we ended up getting a virus. The result was being down for three days."

"In comparison to what we did before, we save so much time now. Ivanti helps us do more with less so we have time for other projects and helping our employees stay productive."

*Randy Bowman
Network Analyst II Information Technology
Presbyterian Church (USA)*

Solution: Making Patching a ‘Piece of Cake’

To bring efficiency and peace of mind to patch management, Presbyterian Church moved to Ivanti Patch for Windows. Now Bowman and the team only hear about other organizations struggling with patching and system instabilities.

“When it comes to critical security patches, we sat down years ago and decided Ivanti Patch for Windows is what we need,” Bowman said. “It’s easy for Ivanti to scan and let us know what’s patched and what’s not, and if it’s critical or not.”

Ivanti Patch for Windows provides centralized, agentless Windows patch management and asset discovery for servers, desktops and mobile devices. Ivanti takes the burden off the IT team by scanning and deploying all available patches—particularly critical security patches.

The organization protects all endpoints with Patch for Windows: 50 servers and 450 PCs in Louisville, Kentucky and Stone Point, New York. Patching covers all deployed applications, including Microsoft Office, Razor’s Edge and grant software.

Bowman and another network engineer oversee monthly server patching while the third team member handles desktops and laptops. Ivanti alerts the team when patches are available and they push them out over a couple of days using Ivanti. When the organization adds a new endpoint on the network, Ivanti discovers and adds it, making it scannable in just seconds.

“You open Ivanti, tell it to push the new agent out, and boom, it’s done,” Bowman said. “It’s a piece of cake.” All the reports the team needs come with Patch for Windows. Bowman and the team look at reports for recently released patches and those that have been deployed. They scan groups of endpoints to see how many patches are missing at any given time. “You can run a report and in five minutes you’ve got the results emailed to you about what patches are missing,” Bowman said.

From Hours a Day to Hours a Month

Before Ivanti, two network engineers each devoted about four hours every day on server patch management. Now, they each spend just three hours per month deploying patches and viewing reports. For PCs, an IT staffer previously spent eight to 10 days on updates. Now it’s just 4.5 hours, and the team gets more done in that time, including status reports.

With half of the work-week freed from server patch management for two people, the organization saves the equivalent of one full-time employee—allowing the church to allocate resources to other areas. Plus, the IT team can focus on other demands, particularly the help desk needs of the staff.

Getting time back from patching contributes to the organization’s low ratio of IT staff to organizational staff, leaving more resources for Presbyterian Church’s mission.

“In comparison to what we did before, we save so much time now,” Bowman said. “Ivanti helps us do more with less so we have time for other projects and helping our employees stay productive.”

“Ivanti has made daily PC patching possible. We never could have done this without it. We are now a lot more stable.”

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Network Analyst II Information Technology
Presbyterian Church (USA)*

Closing the Vulnerability Gap

Even more importantly, Presbyterian Church has the comprehensive protection it needs to remain stable and secure. The ease of patching means that PC updates happen daily and server updates are deployed at least a week faster than before, closing a major vulnerability gap.

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