



INNOVATIVE SECURITY/TRACKING TECHNOLOGY HELPS HOME CARE SERVICE MANAGE AND CONTROL LAPTOPS



Revolutionary Alcatel-Lucent OmniAccess 3500 Nonstop Laptop Guardian provides 24/7 visibility, control and security for sensitive laptop data even if the device is off, tampered with or stolen.



The Visiting Nurse Association of Northern New Jersey (VNANNJ) provides home health services to hundreds of patients in this highly populated area just west of New York City. Nurses and therapists make daily or regular home visits carrying laptop computers containing sensitive patient data and manage a wide range of care-giving activities. New Alcatel-Lucent technology helps protect this vital data by allowing headquarters-based IT managers to remotely oversee, secure and control laptops wherever these devices may be.



“This system solves our biggest security problem because we can now ‘reach out’ to any lost laptop and secure its confidential data.”

Michael Landsittel, IT Manager, VNANNJ

CHALLENGES

- Multiple laptop PCs in the field
- Sensitive clinical/financial data
- Data vulnerable to loss/theft
- No possibility to ‘lockdown’ data if PC stolen/missing
- Maintaining a reputable public image
- Retain patients and employees

SOLUTION

- Alcatel-Lucent **OmniAccess** 3500 Nonstop Laptop Guardian

BENEFITS

- Ensures field laptop is always available to IT
- Immediate ‘lockdown’ of compromised PC data
- Helps deter identity theft
- Manage PC upgrades/data retrieval remotely anytime, anywhere even when laptop turned off
- Tracks staff for better safety/accountability
- Remote management keeps staff in field
- Market privacy protection to obtain new business
- Meets/exceeds current HIPAA requirements

A CENTURY-OLD SERVICE EMBRACES BREAKTHROUGH TECHNOLOGY

For more than 100 years, the VNANNJ has provided home care nursing, therapy and hospice services to patients too ill to leave their homes, but not requiring full-time hospitalization. As a not-for-profit agency, services are provided around the clock, seven days a week regardless of the patient’s ability to pay.

Visiting nurse professionals that serve as case managers assess each individual’s health needs, develop a comprehensive home care plan, and oversee its daily execution. Patients range from the elderly to individuals with severe injuries, advanced cancer, or young people coping with birth defects.

In serving a highly populated area with enormous health needs and caseloads, all visiting nurses/therapists manage their patients using a laptop personal computer (PC) that travels with them at all times. Each device holds critical data including patient progress notes, careplans, medication and financial/insurance information, among other items.

The system helps eliminate loss or theft of sensitive data by remotely ‘locking down’ a traveling laptop the moment trouble is suspected.

Once the only service of its kind, the past 10 years have seen rise to private, for-profit businesses offering in-kind home nursing care. As a result, the VNANNJ is always seeking methodology and offerings to differentiate their organization from competitors. High-technology communication plays a key role in this endeavor.

SECURING THE MOBILE WORKFORCE

“Losing a laptop is the one thing that keeps me up at night,” says Michael Landsittel, IT Manager, VNANNJ. “I dread receiving that phone call because it means the loss of highly sensitive patient information.”

Five years ago, VNANNJ nurses and therapists were given laptop PCs with each patient’s complete clinical and financial records to carry with them on all visits, Landsittel says.

“In that time, we’ve seen how these mobile PCs help staff work faster, smarter and more accurately in the field,” he says. “It also proved an enormous benefit to help maintain our market share and thwart inroads by the for-profit competitors. Patients are intrigued by our ‘high-tech’ appearance.”



“But there’s an enormous downside,” he adds; “The huge IT blind spot these devices create.”

A related issue is asking field nurses to take time away from their patients to visit VNANNJ’s Morristown, New Jersey headquarters to update software or download information. While Landsittel says this process could be done after hours using a web connection, not all nurses have home Internet access or want to spend time-off updating the laptop.

“A nurse typically makes between eight and ten home visits daily,” Landsittel says, “so their time is very limited. Missing a visit just to come here for laptop management issues could put a patient’s health care at risk. Our focus is to keep these professionals in the field as much as possible, and not burden them with demands to come to the office. Skipping a patient visit hurts their productivity and our overall success.”

EXISTING SECURITY SYSTEMS FALL SHORT OF NEEDS

Landsittel adds his IT organization studied various security devices currently available, but all had shortcomings. “We even considered a popular, satellite-based Global Positioning System (GPS) product used heavily in U.S. cities to locate stolen cars and heavy construction equipment,” he says, “but all that permitted was pinpointing a stolen or missing PC – not protect the data it contained. Other USB-based security products had to first be connected to the Internet, something an experienced identity thief would not likely do.”

Landsittel was therefore excited when a contact with Alcatel-Lucent Ventures, a group within Bell Laboratories and research arm of the telecommunications company based in the area, contacted him about being a beta evaluation site for a new product, the Alcatel-Lucent **OmniAccess 3500 Nonstop Laptop Guardian**.

THE SOLUTION TO FULLY SECURE ALL TRAVELING LAPTOPS

This revolutionary technology consists of a PCMCIA card with a unique ‘computer on a card’ concept that’s installed in each laptop’s PCMCIA card slot. Employing 3G third generation wireless broadband technology for data, each Nonstop Laptop Guardian has its own battery, memory, processor, operating system and software that links it to the laptop.

This ensures the protected laptop is always available to the IT organization, working off its own battery power even if the laptop is switched off. All laptops with PCMCIA slots are compatible with Nonstop Laptop Guardian. The technology also features a unique data encryption program, whereby the laptop’s data is only readable using a key on the card. If stolen or misplaced, the IT group can wirelessly locate the specific laptop, revoke the encryption key, and make all data unreadable. If the laptop is later located, the encryption key can be enabled again, restoring all data.

This forms a unique relationship between the laptop and the PCMCIA card in that it’s the ‘ignition key’ to the laptop. The laptop won’t function without the card.



“The Alcatel-Lucent **OmniAccess** 3500 Nonstop Laptop Guardian solves our biggest problem with laptop security because we can now remotely ‘reach out’ to any lost device and immediately take whatever action may be necessary to secure its confidential data,” Landsittel said.

NONSTOP LAPTOP GUARDIAN PROVIDES MANY BENEFITS FOR STAFF/PATIENTS

Landsittel says the technology provides great benefits for employees and patients. “For our traveling professionals, it eliminates the need to come into the office to handle laptop IT issues, such as data downloading and software upgrading,” he said. “We can now update laptops remotely overnight and access them in the field anytime without having to bother the nurses to bring them into the main office.”

A related benefit is ‘IT-type work’ can now be handled by trained computer professionals at the main office who know how to perform it, instead of making nurses and therapists do it. “Nurses love health care, not necessarily computers. They are happy to be free of regular, computer-upgrade work for which they are not as proficient,” Landsittel says.

He adds, “For patients, we tell them their private data is secure, and back up that promise. In turn, promoting Nonstop Laptop Guardian to protect patient privacy gives us a major marketing advantage over other organizations that cannot yet take these extra steps to safeguard their sensitive data. It’s proven to be a major plus with patients over other area homecare providers.” In fact, the remotely controlled management of encryption keys exceeds current requirements under the Title II Privacy Rule of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), enacted by U.S. legislators to establish national standards for electronic healthcare transactions including security and privacy matters.

OTHER FEATURES SUPPORT STAFF SAFETY; ACCOUNTABILITY

Landsittel’s IT group has noted other important benefits from the Alcatel-Lucent **OmniAccess** 3500 Nonstop Laptop Guardian, such as employee safety. “Using the system’s GPS function that pinpoints the location of each laptop proved highly beneficial in protecting our traveling professionals,” he said. “Most nurses/



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therapists are women who sometimes visit unsafe neighborhoods or remote, rural areas. So being able to know exactly where they are is important to our organization, as well as knowing they made it home safely at the end of their daily assignments.”

Landsittel also notes GPS tracking ensures each nurse is making the visits they are scheduled to perform. Then there are staff that don’t always follow laptop security rules as well as they should, such as leaving a laptop overnight in a car. “If we suspect trouble, we’ll easily and remotely disable the device until we contact the person responsible,” he says.

As to connectivity, the 3G-based platform has been thoroughly tested throughout the Association’s service area, and says Landsittel, it’s ‘very good’. “We’re impressed with the on-going ability to quickly and remotely locate and lockdown a laptop PC no matter where it is in our region,” he says. “We can shut it off totally, or just limit the applications that can be run.”

He concludes, “This technology is a ‘win-win’ for our IT efforts. Nurses now stay in the field doing everything electronically to eliminate burdensome paperwork, while we wirelessly obtain the latest data daily from their laptops. The fear long associated with stolen or missing laptops is gone because we can disable them at will. And the community now looks to the VNANNJ as protectors of their most sensitive personal information.”



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