

Healthcare provider automates patch management to 400 endpoints across 10 states

Provider uses the KACE® Systems Management Appliance to simplify patch management and to handle its service desk, software license compliance and IT asset inventory.



“All the work of manually accessing each machine, searching for patches, installing them, rebooting servers and confirming the updates used to go on for months. Now all of that takes only a week, so we can easily push regular patches. The KACE SMA gave us back a lot of time.”

Service Desk Supervisor, Healthcare provider

Quest®

CUSTOMER PROFILE

Company	Radiology provider
Industry	Healthcare
Country	United States
Employees	160

BUSINESS NEED

Healthcare provider fought to keep its 400 endpoints updated with security patches, averaging about 40 hours to schedule, visit and manually update all endpoints.

SOLUTION

By implementing the Quest® KACE® Systems Management Appliance, the provider's IT department replaced the manual update process with fully automated patch management that now takes about one hour to schedule, detect and run. The company also takes advantage of the applications for service desk, software license compliance and asset inventory built into the appliance.

BENEFITS

- Slashed patch management time from 40 hours to 1 hour per update cycle
- Delivered additional IT functions in a single appliance
- Enabled Service Organization Control 2 (SOC 2) compliance with strict information security policies and procedures

SOLUTIONS AT A GLANCE

- Unified endpoint management

When it takes you 40 hours to visit, manually update and schedule the reboot of each of your servers, the patch cycle for all of your endpoints can take months. Then you start over again.

For this provider of on-site and remote radiology services, restarting the manual patch cycle every few months was a way of life. The IT department supports 160 employees at the company's headquarters, plus 200 more who are off-site and spread across 10 states. Time is precious for the small but highly productive IT team, and patch management had become extremely labor-intensive.

MANUAL PATCHING GETS OLD

"When I started here, we didn't have an automated patching process in place," says the company's service desk supervisor. "So I took it on and ran with it. I patched our servers and workstations manually at first, but it was always the bane of my existence and I dreaded every patch cycle."

The supervisor had tried to use Windows Update and Windows Server Update Services (WSUS). But one of her biggest obstacles was that many of the endpoints were off the local network in hospitals and remote medical offices. Connecting to them and using WSUS over the public internet entailed all the additional work of granting access and getting through firewalls, so she was stuck updating all endpoints manually. Just taking servers into consideration, she estimated at least 40 hours to schedule and manually patch all servers and workstations, some of which she updated remotely. Worse yet, she couldn't patch most servers during business hours, so she had to do it in the evening, which stretched each patch cycle out to months.

"Implementing WSUS was a nightmare, given the structure of our business. We got to the point where I just couldn't patch endpoints manually anymore," she says. "The company was growing, so I asked management whether we could invest in automation. They saw how much work it was and how important it is to keep security patches up to date, so they told me to look into patching tools."

AUTOMATING PATCH MANAGEMENT WITH THE KACE SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT APPLIANCE (SMA)

The IT team looked at the KACE® SMA along with products from Kaseya and SolarWinds. From the start, KACE checked the most important boxes for them: ease of use, reviews that were favorable and credible, a comprehensive training program, ease of management and the ability to reach endpoints over the public internet without firewall problems.

Once they had purchased their licenses, they found implementation went quickly and easily, and the training they received was thorough. But the biggest surprise was the amount of time they saved by automating patch management.

"We began automated security patching with the KACE SMA and now we have scheduled patches running on our servers and on our workstations," says the supervisor. "KACE detects which patches are needed, then I schedule the installation and it just runs. I don't even have to touch KACE again until the next patch cycle. It used to take me at least 40 hours to schedule, detect and push out patches to our servers alone. Now I spend about an hour on that."

"All the work of manually accessing each machine, searching for patches, installing them, rebooting servers and confirming the updates used to go on for months. Now all of that takes only a week, so we can easily push regular patches. The KACE SMA gave us back a lot of time. Plus, it's so straightforward, reliable and easy to understand that I feel I can safely hand this automated patching process off to somebody else on the team."

"It used to take me at least 40 hours to schedule, detect and push out patches to our servers alone. Now I spend about an hour on that."

Service Desk Supervisor, Healthcare provider

PRODUCTS & SERVICES

SOFTWARE

KACE Systems Management Appliance

KEEPING AN EYE ON COMPLIANCE, SECURITY AND WANDERING WORKSTATIONS

It didn't take long for the company to start reaping the benefits of other features in the KACE® SMA besides patch management and security.

For its SOC 2 certification, the company must regularly demonstrate the processes and controls in place for operating information systems and providing information system services to other entities.

"KACE has been instrumental in our SOC 2 certification because it automates all of our patches and we can keep our systems up to date so easily now," says the supervisor. "The certification also has specific requirements for change control, so we take advantage of the function in the SMA that puts a timestamp on change approvals and change implementations."

Every healthcare provider depends on keeping both patient information and physical IT assets secure and accounted for. With radiologists at 27 different sites, the company's endpoints are spread across multiple states. IT needs to know where those servers and workstations are, what they're connected to, which software packages are installed and when they've been patched.

"Before KACE, we used to have to access everything manually," the supervisor says, "and I couldn't always be sure of what a given computer was doing and where it was doing it. Now, we can examine our inventory in the SMA and run a report showing any computers that have not connected to the network for more than, say, 90 days. The inventory and IT asset management feature shows me who has old hardware, and we can replace it before we get complaints. It also helps us with software license compliance. It's great to be able to track IT inventory so easily."

AN "ALL-ENCOMPASSING IT PRODUCT" — AND WORK/LIFE BALANCE, TOO

The IT department is gradually shifting from using spreadsheets to relying on the KACE SMA for many tasks. The KACE IT service desk is so easy to understand and use that other departments now want in on it.

"I thought it was going to be just an IT thing," she says. "Then our billing department asked to use KACE service desk for some of the requests they receive. And our analytics teams have requested a ticketing queue for managing requests to run reports. The SMA has become both a company-wide tool and an all-encompassing IT product for us. Even when I'm stuck in traffic during my morning commute, I can use the KACE Go mobile app to check queues and assign tickets."

The supervisor says that the company's migration to Windows 10 is coming up soon, and she has her eye on the KACE Systems Deployment Appliance (SDA) for that project. She hopes that, like the KACE SMA, the KACE SDA will help with everyone's work/life balance during the migration.

"I love everything about KACE!" she says. "It has helped us in so many different areas to get more organized and stay compliant. I couldn't be happier. I used to have to work late at home, kicking off patches and watching to make sure everything finished. I'm glad I don't have to do that anymore."

ABOUT QUEST

At Quest, our purpose is to solve complex problems with simple solutions. We accomplish this with a philosophy focused on great products, great service and an overall goal of being simple to do business with. Our vision is to deliver technology that eliminates the need to choose between efficiency and effectiveness, which means you and your organization can spend less time on IT administration and more time on business innovation.

"I love everything about KACE! It has helped us in so many different areas to get more organized and stay compliant. I couldn't be happier."

Service Desk Supervisor, Healthcare provider

View more case studies at [Quest.com/quest.com/customer-stories](https://www.quest.com/quest.com/customer-stories)