CommuniGate
SYSTEMS

INDUSTRY

The Gertrude H. Sergievsky Center is the medical research facility connected with Columbia University's College of Physicians & Surgeons and the Neurological Institute. Established in 1977, the Center's main focus revolves around integrating epidemiology with genetic analysis and clinical investigation to explore all phases of diseases of the nervous system that affect humans.

The Sergievsky Center specializes in studies of epilepsy, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease and other neurological disorders and employs researchers in Iceland, Ecuador, Kazakhstan, Italy and other countries around the world.

CommuniGate Pro at Columbia University Research Center— Discovering a Better Messaging and Scheduling Solution

CHALLENGE

As a preeminent research facility, constant communication among global researchers and faculty is crucial for collaborating and discussing current findings. To facilitate this process, the Sergievsky Center must ensure an unfailing flow of information. Because the Center's researchers are stationed all over the world, email has evolved into an essential component of communicating information, sharing test results and asking questions. The entire staff also depends on email to schedule meetings between researchers, doctors, patient interviewers and the patients themselves.

The Sergievsky Center also requires a proven and secure system. Clinical trials are an important part of drug discovery and research, and the information that comes from these is highly restricted because it involves working directly with patients. The research center must guarantee patient confidentiality.

When Columbia University first came to CommuniGate Systems in 1999, they wanted to upgrade the Center's legacy email system which was slow, expensive to scale and did not meet the stringent security standards.

The system, Netscape Messaging Server running on Windows NT server, had unscheduled downtime at least once a month, creating a real obstacle for researchers. The IT staff was looking to expand to a comprehensive messaging solution that ran on Linux for stability and lower hardware costs.

They deployed CommuniGate Pro, migrated all of their users, and have been running for three years with zero unscheduled downtime. With reliability like that, it's no wonder that when CommuniGate Systems released Groupware in 2002, Columbia saw the opportunity to enhance their trusted email platform by adding collaborative functionality on the desktop.

SOLUTION

To meet all of their messaging and group-scheduling demands, the Sergievsky Center again turned to CommuniGate Systems.

CommuniGate Systems' flagship product, CommuniGate Pro with Groupware features an array of built–in services including standards based SMTP, POP, IMAP and Webmail. The solution also includes an integrated LDAP Directory, support for Outlook group scheduling, shared folders, personal Web pages, mailing lists and SPAM/virus protection.

By implementing the comprehensive functionality of CommuniGate Pro with Groupware, the Center's research staff is able to take advantage of real time group scheduling and calendar visibility. Microsoft Outlook running on the desktop in full workgroup mode enables end users to share calendars and address books, making scheduling much more efficient. With Webmail capabilities, remote workers are able to enjoy the same access, regardless of what operating system they have.

CommuniGate Pro meets the IT department's requirements as well. The software runs on more than 30 operating systems including Linux, and the migration was seamless using built-in tools for moving accounts and mailboxes. The Sergievsky Center secures all communications, using the same level of secure transactions as are used for Web commerce.

BENEFITS

• Unparalleled reliability
• Incomparable security
• Outlook functionality without the flaws associated with Microsoft Exchange

"For more than three years, the Sergievsky Center has been running its employees on CommuniGate Pro and has never experienced any downtime. For an organization that relies on email and scheduling to manage doctors and patients, downtime is not acceptable. Needless to say we know we made the right decision to use Stalker Software's products and services," said Gary Wilson IT Director for the research center. "In addition, as a leading research institute, there are many strict requirements vendors we work with must adhere to, the most important being security and reliability. Because we are dealing with patient information, ensuring confidentiality is absolutely non-negotiable for us, especially with email and online scheduling, and Stalker Software's security features are unmatched by competing vendors."

Columbia University relies on CommuniGate Pro with Groupware to provide reliable and secure email and scheduling services for the Sergievsky Center. With those services in place, the medical teams are free to better perform their jobs. With no worries about email outages or makeshift calendars, the dedicated staff can focus on the patient care and research that makes them one of the top facilities in the world.

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