



The Kennedy Center Well-Choreographed Desktop Operations

Located on 17 acres that overlook the Potomac River in Washington, D.C., the Kennedy Center is a living memorial to President John F. Kennedy, as well as the United States' busiest arts facility. Presenting an unmatched variety of theater and musicals, dance and ballet, the Kennedy Center hosts more than 3,000 performances each year by the greatest artists from across America and around the world. From pre- and post-production activities to the actual productions, the Center's IT infrastructure plays a vital role in making sure those operations perform successfully. A key enabler of that success is the well-choreographed desktop operations orchestrated by LANDesk® Management Suite from LANDesk.

Business Needs

- Maximize technology usage for efficient and effective business operations, while spending as few resources as possible.

Solution

- LANDesk® Management Suite
- LANDesk® Patch Manager

Business Benefits

- Maximize and extend the life of hardware assets through automated inventory management and tracking.
- Instantly resolve computer problems regardless of location.
- With minimal manpower and effort, deliver an agile IT infrastructure that enables the business to take advantage of new opportunities.
- Provide auditing capabilities that enable the demonstration of efficient operations, plus provide the proper controls to ensure the integrity and confidentiality of data.

Effectively Managed Assets

On a given night, thousands of people will attend performances held in any one of the Kennedy Center's eight theaters. Even more will be watching those performances broadcast in real-time to a worldwide audience over the Internet. The IT team at the Kennedy Center supports all of those productions, as well as the day-to-day operations of its 1,100 or so users comprised of employees and visiting artists. It operates as efficiently as possible, trying to maximize its technology usage with as few resources as possible. Critical to maximizing that usage is its leverage of LANDesk® Management Suite to manage its more than 600 computers, as well as those computers brought in by visiting artists that need network access.

"We have a very dynamic environment," says Alan Levine, Chief Information Officer at the Kennedy Center. "A large variety of people come in and out of here for weeks at a time needing various levels of network access. We needed a tool that would allow us to track and manage all of that activity and support it with the smallest possible staff, while maximizing the security of the network. LANDesk® Management Suite meets the bill for us in all of those areas."

In terms of tracking its assets, the Kennedy Center uses LANDesk® Management Suite to easily determine which people are using which computers. "Our budget only allows us to purchase a certain percentage of PCs each year and we want to make sure we get the right PCs to the right people," Levine says. To do this, the Kennedy Center implements an inheritance methodology where the newest hardware is provided to tier 1 users, those with the most extensive business needs. The tier 1 users' old hardware is then given to tier 2 users, and their old hardware goes to tier 3 users. This allows the Center to get the most out of its budget, while ensuring that all users have hardware appropriate to their specific business needs.

"Without LANDesk Management Suite we would need to triple our staff to manage and track all of our PCs," Levine says. "LANDesk Management Suite allows us to match up hardware to the business needs of the user. Without it, we couldn't realistically implement our PC inheritance strategy."

On Schedule Performance

The layout of the Kennedy Center building itself creates some PC support challenges that IT teams in typical business offices don't have to deal with. The Center's eight theaters have huge, cavernous spaces with offices tucked inside, around, above and underneath. It would be very inefficient if the Center's help desk had to provide physical desk-side support to all of the users in those various office locations. "When users call our help desk, we can instantly remote control their machines with LANDesk," Levine says. "Users can show us what they're doing. We can show them how to do certain things. We can also fix the problem by either using remote control or by pushing out software patches to them."

Right now the Kennedy Center employs about one help desk technician for every 175 users. It has calculated that if it had to provide physical desk-side support, as well as manually install software, it would need to employ about one help desk technician for every 75 users. "We have a very small help desk that supports a large number of users spread out over a very large facility," Levine says. "Being able to instantly access information and instantly remote control every asset on our network with LANDesk allows to keep the staff on our help desk at a very small size in relation to the large number of users they're supporting."

An Agile IT Infrastructure

The Kennedy Center also takes advantage of the patch management and software distribution capabilities in LANDesk® Management Suite. Its automated software distribution ensures standardized configuration for all of the Center's PCs, resulting in reduced help desk incidents and more productive users. With LANDesk® Patch Manager, the Center can patch all of its more than 600 computers in as little as two hours. But perhaps more important is the LANDesk® solution's ability to report on whether the individual computers were successfully patched.

"For whatever reason, when you update 600 machines, there might be one or two that happen to fail," says Samuel Jones, Desktop and Network Technician at the Kennedy Center. "If that happens, LANDesk sends an inventory alert telling you that the patch failed on that machine. We have to make sure we protect every single PC so, it's vital that we know about any patch failure."

The reporting and auditing capabilities in LANDesk® Management Suite help the Kennedy Center in other ways as well. As a not-for-profit organization, it depends on funding from government and corporate grants, as well as donations from individuals and foundations. Quite often these organizations and individuals request independently-audited statements that show that the Center is well managed, that it's protecting its data and that it's living up to its responsibilities. "The auditing capabilities in LANDesk Management Suite are really important to us," Levine says. "It enables us to demonstrate to external auditors that we are efficiently managed and that we have the proper controls in place to ensure the integrity and confidentiality of our data."

Levine concludes, "LANDesk Management Suite empowers us to be proactive in ensuring our systems are operational, while enabling us to be agile in moving the business forward and responding to business needs."



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— Alan Levine
Kennedy Center
Chief Information Officer

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