



Gateway helps Golden State conserve precious IT resources

The California Environmental Protection Agency is implementing a Wake-on-LAN system that saves both time and money.

Cal/EPA sets the standard for environmental awareness and wise use of assets, so agency leaders are extremely cognizant of the impact their choices may have — in even the smallest degree — on the state's environment. Established in 1991, the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA) oversees six state boards, departments and offices with the mission of protecting the environment to ensure public health, environmental quality and economic vitality for California's citizens.

For several years, Gateway desktop PCs have bolstered Cal/EPA's IT and environmental strategies by delivering powerful and reliable computing power that's also resource-friendly.

"One of the big benefits of our Gateway E-1400 desktop computers is reduced power consumption due to their integrated chipset components and small form factor," said Gary Arstein-Kerslake, information officer for Cal/EPA. "As a result, they have a smaller power supply, give off less heat and can use smaller cooling

fans. The bottom line for the customer is smaller, quieter and more energy-efficient systems. Gateway also used a lot of sheet metal in the case for these small form factor systems, which eventually will be a good thing for recyclability. Overall, it's a very nice computer system."

Energy efficiency became particularly important during California's statewide electricity crisis a few years ago. But it's a different challenge they're facing now. The Golden State has been hard hit by budget difficulties, and recently IT officials at Cal/EPA have placed new emphasis on doing even more with even less.

LIFE PRESERVER

The IT strategy at Cal/EPA these days — and at many other state organizations — centers on avoiding new hardware costs where possible while simultaneously delivering better services to end-users. As part of an agencywide operating system upgrade, Arstein-Kerslake and his crew are using a built-in feature of Gateway E-1400s — known as Wake-on-LAN — that they

CUSTOMER PROFILE

BACKGROUND:

The California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA) was formed in 1991 to serve as the single cabinet-level agency that encompasses the Air Resources Board, Water Resources Control Board, Integrated Waste Management Board, Department of Toxic Substances Control, Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment and the Department of Pesticide Regulation.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE:

Like most California state offices, Cal/EPA was hard hit with budget constraints. Agency IT officials are trying to avoid new hardware costs by making the

most of current Gateway E-1400 desktop computer systems. Those systems already provide Cal/EPA with an energy-efficient desktop computing solution.

TECHNOLOGY CHALLENGE:

Cal/EPA's IT team sought to improve desktop efficiency by automatically performing maintenance overnight when desktop PCs were not in use. Funds for such a solution were nonexistent, forcing the team to solve the problem without dipping into a nearly empty budget.

SOLUTION:

Cal/EPA's Gateway E-1400 PCs come equipped with a Wake-on-LAN feature. The agency will use Wake-on-LAN

to perform off-hours software upgrades, patch management, defragmentation and deletion of temporary Internet files — providing maximum uptime for end-users during business hours.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT:

Using Gateway's Wake-on-LAN feature, Cal/EPA is improving user productivity and extending the lives of desktop systems. The Wake-on-LAN feature is being deployed at virtually no cost to California taxpayers. EPA officials also like the fact that Gateway's E-1400s have a low rate of power consumption and contain recyclable components.

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believe will increase productivity, extend the life of desktop systems and offer an immediate cost benefit.

“We knew our Gateway computers supported the Wake-on-LAN feature,” said Arstein-Kerslake. “We knew if we could implement the system across our 600 machines, we could extend the life of those systems by providing increased performance for our customers.”

How are they able to do that? Wake-on-LAN allows the agency's server to send a wake-up call to sleeping desktop computers in order to have them perform various system upgrades and tasks when the systems are not otherwise in use. Cal/EPA will use Wake-on-LAN to implement new operating

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Gateway supported Cal/EPA's efforts in several ways. The company fully recognized the agency's budget constraints and lent a hand when Cal/EPA's IT team ran into challenges implementing the Wake-on-LAN feature.

“It was a little tricky, and we needed some assistance,” said Arstein-Kerslake. “We turned to Gateway, and they provided a technical engineer to help us. He invested a fair amount of time focusing on this specific issue and how to get it to work.”

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system security patches, as well as defragment PC hard drives, delete temporary Internet files and run anti-virus software.

All procedures will occur during off hours — weekends or weeknights — so end-users will find faster-running and more secure desktop computers when they return to work in the morning.

“Theoretically, a computer system will be woken at night, receive the update, install the update and then shut down when it's completed,” said Stuart Clark, technical support specialist for Cal/EPA. “Then when someone comes into work in the morning, the process isn't taking up any of their precious time — it's already been done.”

PRICE IS RIGHT

The ability to make desktop systems more efficient while not interfering with user productivity is particularly impressive given the fact that the Cal/EPA's Wake-on-LAN feature is being deployed at virtually no cost.

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NEARING COMPLETION

Cal/EPA officials intend to roll out the Wake-on-LAN feature within three months as part of an organizationwide software upgrade. “We're in the final stages of testing,” said Clark. “I'm repeatedly testing the Wake-on-LAN functions for the desktop systems to make sure they turn on at the proper times and that they run and shut down properly.

The entire Wake-on-LAN implementation takes advantage of an existing but underutilized feature in the hardware. According to Arstein-Kerslake, “it just took a little creativity and focused effort to make it happen”—something for which Cal/EPA is well known.

As California's budget crunch eases, Cal/EPA officials likely will be in the market for new hardware. When that day arrives, Arstein-Kerslake and his staff certainly will seek not only the most efficient and price-friendly machines, but also those that keep Cal/EPA's environmental conscience clear. And Gateway will be ready to meet those needs.