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## IT SHAKE-UP

San Juan County consolidates its purchasing power to buy Gateway computers at bulk prices, simplifying deployment and maintenance, and increasing productivity.

**Individual agencies in San Juan County, N.M.,”** no longer bother with the computer purchasing process, thanks to a countywide purchasing consolidation project devised by Ellen Bristow, county IT administrator and Joni Kelsey, PC service technician for the county.

### Purchasing Power

San Juan County transferred computer purchasing control from every agency to the county's IT department, allowing Bristow and Kelsey to drastically cut costs through bulk purchases of Gateway equipment for the county's 600 users.

Bristow said frequent budget cuts repeatedly prompted department heads to slash PC budgets. Lower prices generated by the consolidated purchasing project enabled the county to implement a consistent three-year PC replacement cycle, regardless of budget cuts. The county strategically spreads cuts across all agencies when belt-tightening is unavoidable, reducing their impact for every agency.

Before the county's purchasing consolidation project, county employees performing mission-critical tasks were often stuck using antiquated systems.

"We'd end up with machines on desks that were six or seven years old — old technology that could not keep up with the pace of what's required of our workers," Kelsey said.

Kelsey put together a business case that persuaded the San Juan County Commission to approve the consolidation. The county's Gateway representative helped Kelsey find information she needed to make the case.

"He provided any kind of support or information we needed," Kelsey said. "He did searches for us to find how other organizations worked. He gave us statistics. He gave us dollar figures and a white paper we could take to sell this to the commissioners."

San Juan County implemented the consolidation project in 2005 and has saved roughly \$45,000 so far while increasing performance.

"The response has been really good; especially from the management part of the county — the commissioners, the CEO, the department heads and elected officials. Everybody's been very supportive of centralizing the purchase of workstations. Department heads have better computers for their people, and the cost savings for the county — that's been huge," Bristow said.

She said a few department heads were concerned about relinquishing their purchasing control at first but eventually supported the project because it freed them to devote more resources to their agencies' core functions, instead of the tools used to perform those functions.

Standardizing on Gateway computers also allows IT staff to focus their repair skills on just a few types of systems, reducing repair time and increasing employee productivity, said Kelsey, adding that that was one detail that persuaded the county commission to approve the consolidation.

### Replacement Cycle

Bristow and Kelsey did a priority analysis revealing the county had 300 mission-critical users whose computers should never exceed three years old. The

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## Customer Profile

### Agency:

San Juan County, N.M., IT Department

### Mission:

To provide quality, timely, relevant and cost-effective IT support to all San Juan County offices.

### Technology Objective:

Standardize on a single PC supplier to lower acquisition costs and simplify maintenance and support.

### Gateway Solution:

Gateway provides all of San Juan County with desktops, tablet PCs and Profiles at lower costs. Gateway also provides a simple part replacement process to county IT repair staff.

### ROI:

As a result of consolidating all PC purchases with Gateway, bulk purchasing saved the county \$45,000, dramatically streamlined the PC maintenance process and increased productivity.

county started the replacement cycle by purchasing 159 Gateway PCs in 2005 to make up for sluggish buying the prior year. The county now purchases 100 Gateway PCs every year to continue the three-year rotation. When a system reaches three years old, it is passed to a station that performs a less critical function, such as kiosk positions and maintenance locations. After three years in the less critical locations, more three-year-old Gateway machines replace the six-year-old machines, and the cycle continues.

Kelsey said the IT department's control over all PCs eliminated the problem of some agencies letting usable PCs sit idle.

"They would take and stick them on the shelf, and let them rot for four more years and not use them anywhere else," she said. "This way, we get them all back, and we redeploy them where they're needed."

Sometimes the county has a surplus of older Gateway computers and lends them to nonprofit organizations in the community, like senior-citizen centers, Head Start and the Extended Care Health Option, which assists individuals with disabilities.

### Catching Up With the Times

Kelsey used the consolidation process as an opportunity to upgrade the graphics computers used by county mapping technicians.

"I was looking at graphics machines for all of our mapping people, and I was only thinking along the lines of 2 gigs of RAM. I talked to Santa Fe County, and they were putting 4 gigs in their machines. I thought, 'My goodness, I'm in the Dark Ages. I need to pull us out of that because these mappers, if it takes them 10 minutes to pull up a project, they're not being productive,'" Kelsey said.

The county purchased Gateway E-6500 desktops, with Intel® Pentium® D Dual Core Technology, with dual monitors for county mapping technicians.

"These people are loving them," Kelsey said.

Many county executives use Gateway notebooks, but as notebooks cater more to people seeking an increasingly wider screen, Kelsey said county executives and commissioners now prefer Gateway tablet PCs, which are more compact and ideal for travel.

"Everyone who got a tablet last year is so pleased with it," Kelsey said. "We're also ordering tablets with 802.11g wireless technology. I have people requesting them all the time."

The county purchased 45 Gateway Profiles, which include Intel® Pentium® 4 Processors with HT Technology<sup>1</sup>, as part of the initial consolidation purchase.

"The people who do data entry love the Gateway Profiles because of the space savings on their desktop," Kelsey said.

She said the easy mobility of the Profiles allowed her to set up temporary classrooms in 45 minutes.

"Before we went to the Profiles," Kelsey said, "we had towers we had to move to form a classroom, which took us a couple of hours to set up."

The county also purchased Gateway's 24-bay Mobile Lab Cart containing 20 Gateway M250E wireless laptops. Classroom setup time has been further reduced to five minutes.

Gateway provides the county with a range of hardware and devices, so it is equipped to meet any need.

### Incomparable Service

Kelsey said roughly 525 of San Juan County's 600 users use Gateway PCs because Gateway's service makes repairs simple for her. She said Gateway recognizes that her staff of professional IT technicians don't have time for tedious troubleshooting with technical support telephone operators before getting approval for part replacements.

"We don't have to jump through fire hoops to order a part," Kelsey said. "I get online, and I tell them what part I want. I don't have to prove it's defective. I just tell them, 'I would like this part, with this serial number,' and it's shipped to me, no questions asked. It takes me five minutes to order a part. It's a huge impact on my time. I can't get that service from any other vendor, anywhere. That's worth its weight in gold."

Kelsey said other vendors wanted her to endure an arduous certification process before receiving online part ordering privileges.

"I'm in IT. I've been doing it for years," said Kelsey. "I don't want to waste my time going through online training to order parts."

With consolidated purchasing, county IT staff spend less time on administrative minutia and focus on providing a quality IT environment for county employees. By standardizing on Gateway equipment, San Juan County enjoys cost savings, excellent service, increased productivity and a wide variety of hardware to choose from.



Gateway Profiles with Intel® Pentium® 4 Processors with HT Technology<sup>1</sup> allow simple deployment and ample desk space.



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<sup>1</sup> Performance may vary. See [www.intel.com](http://www.intel.com) for additional information.