



NetBotz in Healthcare

The Problem:

Because the hospital's IT system handles critical information, including patient information, research, billing records and other vital data, the facility mandated 99.9% percent uptime. To achieve this goal, the staff realized it needed a way to monitor for environmental threats - excessive heat, high humidity, water leaks and air flow problems - that could lead to network downtime, data loss, work slowdowns and negative publicity.

"When a lot of people think of data centers they think of nice new rooms in nice new buildings with raised floors and all the trimmings," said the IT manager of special IT projects for the hospital. "Mostly what we're dealing with are just old rooms that have been renovated. So the HVAC system may or may not be adequate for it. We really wanted to keep an eye on those areas. We knew it would cost a lot less money to automatically monitor the environmental conditions in those rooms than to start replacing servers that got cooked because we didn't get enough warning."

"This information we're protecting, it's critical", added the manager. "We're talking about patient information, charges, things like that. We don't want to compromise our ability to treat patients, we don't want to compromise our research and we don't want to compromise our business interests. When these applications go down it affects our ability to care for patients - to be able to pull their charts up or to order medications or whatever they need."

Other areas of the hospital also needed monitoring. The cancer research portion of the facility has 4,000 freezers that store cultures, blood samples, testing material and the priceless results of years of research. Thus the facility needed a way to ensure that the conditions in the freezer rooms, which were scattered around separate buildings, didn't become too warm or cool.

Soon another project was put on the must-have list: the hospital wanted a system to manage and track the environmental conditions that limit the shelf life of cancer drugs in the its internal pharmacy, with the goal of preventing premature expiration of key drugs and theft.

"Nobody has unlimited money or resources," said the hospital's IT manager of special projects. "The more things you can automate the better off you are. If you can have a tool out there that's watching and recording the environment for you so you don't have to have an operator walk out there every hour and with a clipboard, that is a good thing."



Large Urban Cancer Hospital

A large New York cancer hospital derives its unique strength from the close collaboration between its scientists and physicians. Key to that collaboration: an IT network that knows how to stay healthy.

**To schedule a web demo of the
NetBotz product line, contact your
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The Solution:

The IT manager's job as special IT project manager is to find technology that improves the business and client care. When he looked at NetBotz, he saw multiple solutions. The devices would save money, bolster patient care and the facility's research programs, prevent equipment breakdowns and increase security.

"We tried using another company's solution, but it was very cumbersome," he said. "It was proprietary, so any time we needed something changed, we had to pay them. NetBotz is more mobile and easier to deal with. It has more things that we can control. The fact that it's Web-based is great - no custom software is needed." The deployment at the hospital NetBotz started with a walkthrough by NetBotz technicians; By March 2003 a single NetBotz appliance was monitoring a freezer room. But that single unit made a compelling case; the facility bought 15 in May and 40 in September of that year. Now it's buying about two per month. The facility is tying it all together with a NetBotz management console and server, enabling personnel to check the status of rooms from any location through any Web browser.

NetBotz now monitors environmental conditions in buildings and the data center located outside the city. Some 80 NetBotz appliances monitor freezers and pharmacology labs. If the temperature varies from a pre-set range, IT or maintenance personnel are alerted by phone, e-mail or pager. In some cases NetBotz cameras monitor the freezers so workers can see, from a control panel, if a door is open or is there a problem with the freezer itself.

The Benefits:

The hospital estimates an annual return on investment of 2,843 percent, including prevention of loss of valuable laboratory materials, reduced theft, prevention of damage to computers and servers and increased productivity due to increased network up time.

"The most important thing is that when alarms were going off in the past people weren't getting the word fast enough," said the manager. "So they weren't able to respond in time to prevent products from being damaged or compromised. That was a huge problem."

HIPPA compliance is easier and more complete now because NetBotz appliances log and archive data and activities.

Theft and spoilage has been significantly reduced in the pharmaceutical storage facility.

Security is tighter; several times since the NetBotz implementation, personnel have been caught trying to steal items from "secure" rooms. NetBotz appliances detected a water leak that, if not caught early, would have caused "serious damage," he said - destroying computer equipment worth hundreds of thousands of dollars and compromising research.

NetBotz even solved the mysterious case of a laboratory freezer that was being opened at night in an area that was supposedly inaccessible. "We had people swearing, 'I've got the keys to my room; there's nobody else in my room after 5:30 when we leave,'" said the IT manager. NetBotz cameras showed who was opening the freezer at night, which was compromising the products inside. A quick talk with the worker's supervisor solved that problem. The hospital is impressed by NetBotz economy, efficiency and versatility. "We would recommend NetBotz," he said. "And we do. We've had people from other hospitals and institutions come over here to take a look. One of the things we tell them is the NetBotz support has been great - they're always there when we need them. But the main thing is if NetBotz is good enough for our mission, then it should be good enough for anybody."

"This kind of automation and prevention of loss means a real money savings for us," said the IT manager. "For pennies we're protecting millions and millions and millions of dollars worth of state-of-art networking and patient records and the products of decades of cancer research. It's a big deal."

Core Benefits:

- Reduces loss of irreplaceable tissue samples in R&D areas by monitoring freezers 24/7.
- Assures integrity of research by logging activity in labs.
- Creates record allowing post-event diagnosis, enabling prevention of future problems.
- Reduces operating costs by reducing drug spoilage and theft.
- Reduces risk of false workmen's comp claims by logging levels of room gasses and other toxins.
- Increased security via NetBotz cameras.
- Better HIPAA compliance - NetBotz tracks who did what and when.
- Reporting engine for trend analysis and mass archiving for future audits.
- Instant alert of hospital personnel via cell phone, pager or e-mail

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