



The Power of Being There®



Case Study

Hostworks achieves ultimate scalability with Avocent KVM over IP switches

“With Avocent switches we've got the ultimate scalability. As we continue to add more data centres, we simply add more switches. For Hostworks, this is the perfect future-proof solution.”

Mike Sellars
Technical Analysis Manager
Hostworks Limited

The decision to upgrade KVM requirements

Hostworks Limited offers a complete range of fully-managed services including customised hosting services for Web and critical applications for medium to large organisations. Clients include ninemsn, AOL|7, Ticketek, Zuji, Compass Group and Greater Union. It is one of only four Internet Data Centres worldwide, hosting Microsoft MSN “Tier 1” content.

Headquartered in Adelaide, Australia and listed on the ASX, Hostworks’ recent acquisitions and strong growth in new business prompted the organisation to reassess its KVM requirements. In a major upgrade, the company chose an Avocent patented KVM over IP solution for its superior scalability and easy remote management of multiple data centres.

Mike Sellars, technical analysis manager for Hostworks, explained, “It is important we continue to demonstrate leadership in our market and use industry-leading tools. As part of our regular review process we determined a need to review our KVM requirements.”

The two decisive factors were:

- The limitations and lack of scalability of the existing system; and
- The need for a solution to remotely manage data centres in other regions as a result of growth.

Ben Ryks, Tier 3 technical support engineer at Hostworks, added, “With our existing IP system, all the physical hardware had to be connected to the server. That was fine within the confines of our Adelaide office, but we had to find a way to connect our Sydney operations.”

Avocent is “clear choice” for scalability

With responsibility for hosting 300 e-commerce transactions per second and 15 percent of all Australian Internet page views, Hostworks is a 24/7 business that looks for best of breed solutions to meet the requirements of its customers.

“Avocent was the clear choice for scalability,” said Sellars. “We have a system administered by one area that can now scale to hundreds of thousands. For example, we purchased a company six weeks ago with no existing KVM solution. Incorporating them into our system is as simple as buying and plugging in new switches.”

Ryks added, “If we’d stayed with our incumbent system we would have had to invest hundreds of thousands of dollars in new hardware, and still faced limited upgrade capability. With Avocent, we’ll just buy another switch!”



HOSTWORKS

Solution for challenging environment

Almost three-quarters of Hostworks' 50+ employees hold technical positions. The server environment is a mixture of Windows 2000, HP, Compaq, SUN machines running Solaris and Red Hat Linux machines.

"The Avocent KVM switches have 16 server ports on them," said Ryks. "We plug the servers into the switch and the switch plugs into the network. We have access locally and remotely via IP. We've invested in over 20 switches and have 10 to 15 people using them all day every day, which makes us a heavy user. The new DSR4010 switches score high for performance and usability. Prior to full implementation, we did undertake thorough testing to make sure we understood how it works, which proved invaluable in the long run."

Avocent provides remote access

As Hostworks continues to expand, the importance of remote access is increasingly important. "The ability to connect on a laptop from a hotel room, home or sickbed and remotely access the entire data centre means we are more productive," said Ryks. "It helps us meet deadlines and saves us from spending evenings stuck in the office. Several managers and nearly all Tier 3 staff regularly use remote access."

A sound investment

Peter Widly, CFO at Hostworks, said, "Anything we do has to first fulfill our technical objectives and, second, the

numbers have to stack up. With Avocent, we're getting the deliverables we need at a price that works."

Sellers added, "We have over 400 server ports and our cost per port to manage is now lower than before; plus we've taken a leap forward. By choosing KVM over IP, rather than a dedicated interface, we're using the existing infrastructure, thereby minimising disruption and cost."

Improved security and availability

Switching to Avocent has streamlined security for Hostworks. Ryks explained, "Previously, the system wasn't networked. Now that it is fully networked, we don't need so many user names and passwords and every access to the server is logged. Security-wise, we have everything on a separate network locked-off from the rest of the world."

Service and expertise

Ryks concluded, "When we did strike a few issues during implementation, Avocent came in-house and worked with us to resolve them. They also provided practical training for about 50 of our people, which was a big help."

"The technical expertise and support we receive from Avocent locally and internationally meets expectations," added Sellers.

About Avocent

Avocent (NASDAQ: AVCT) is the leading worldwide supplier of KVM (keyboard, video and mouse) switching and connectivity solutions that provide IT managers with access and control of multiple servers and network data centre devices. Avocent was formed from the merger of the world's two largest KVM switch manufacturers: Apex and Cybex Computer Products Corporation. More than 22 years of experience goes into Avocent KVM solutions. They are distributed by the world's largest server manufacturers and installed in Fortune 100 companies around the world.

Headquartered in Huntsville, Alabama, Avocent has locations in the states of Washington, Florida, Massachusetts and Texas. International locations include Australia, Ireland, Great Britain, Germany, Japan, China and Singapore. Visit www.avocent.com.au for more information about Avocent products.

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About Hostworks: www.hostworks.com.au

Hostworks is Australia's leading provider of outsourced IT operations delivering application management and critical hosting services and operates one of only four worldwide data centres hosting MSN 'Tier 1' content for Microsoft.

Hostworks manages the availability, performance and running costs of its customers' critical business applications, and delivers its services on tightly engineered, secure infrastructure to protect customer applications and data from security threats.

Hostworks customers make up over 15 percent of all Australian Web page views. Hostworks manages over 300 transactions per second for its customers. Hostworks' customers include ninemsn, Ticketek, Baggy Green, Austereo, Optus, Compass Group (formerly Eurest), and AAMI.

Hostworks' state-of-the-art data centre in Kidman Park, South Australia, boasts 3.3 gigabits per second of Internet connectivity together with world-class monitoring and support systems operated by a team of IT operations experts with specialist skills in Internet environments.

Hostworks recently acquired a major competitor, Dimension Data Central Australia.



Avocent DSR™ KVM switch solutions are flexible, scalable and work with existing network architecture. They offer local and remote access and require only 1U of valuable rack space.