SUMITOMO CORPORATION ASIA PTE LTD

Hitachi JP1/Software Distribution lowered costs, improves end-user support, and enables centralised and distributed management of client PCs spread over nine business entities in Southeast and Southwest Asia.

Sumitomo Corporation Asia Pte. Ltd. (SCAS) is a leading integrated business enterprise, with interests ranging from the supply of equipment and raw materials through technology introduction, financial assistance, logistics arrangement and investments. Incorporated in 1991, it is recognised for its ability to deliver tailored business solutions that are best suited to its clients' needs. The IT needs of SCAS and its sister companies in Southeast and Southwest Asia are managed and met by its IT Department, which uses Hitachi JP1/Software Distribution to ensure that its mission-critical SAP R/3 applications stay current and that end-user issues are resolved quickly.

A member of the Sumitomo Group, Sumitomo Corporation Asia Pte. Ltd. (SCAS) is a leading trader and investor. The company's five business groups are supported by the Administration Group, which includes an IT Department that takes care of SCAS's technology needs as well as those of eight sister companies located across Southeast and Southwest Asia.

The nine entities, which have more than 600 client PCs between them, each has a lean IT team ranging in size from just one person to seven persons. Every one of the client PCs has essentially the same set of client software and all the business entities use the SAP R/3 suite of enterprise applications hosted in Tokyo, Japan.

While this near uniformity makes for a tidy client environment, the physical spread of the individual facilities and the leanness of the local IT teams combine to make software distribution and attending to requests from end-users for technical support challenging.

Manual Software Distribution

"As an example, the end-users in Singapore are spread over several floors. The distribution of new software or the patching of existing ones was a manual process, with installation performed PC by PC. Each installation typically took from one to two days to complete and end-user operations had to be interrupted, leading to lost productivity," said Mr. Yasuhiro Sato, Deputy Dept. Manager, IT Department. As with the installation of new software and patches, attending to end-user problems that were difficult to pinpoint and resolved over the phone involved

travelling from floor to floor. In the Singapore office, where there could be up to 20 such requests a day for desk-side support, the lone hardware engineer was kept busy enough, not to mention his colleagues in the countries with even smaller IT teams.

On occasion, when the IT Department in Singapore had to devote its full attention to other projects, contract labour were brought in to perform the software installation and/or helpdesk tasks.

Switch to Automated Solution

Realising that manual updating of end-user PCs was not a smart or cost-effective long-term solution, SCAS's IT Department resolved to switch to an automated regime, preferably one that could also bring relief to the helpdesk component of its responsibilities.

Topmost on its wish list were the ability to shorten the report-to-resolve cycle for end-user issues, faster distribution of software, minimal interruption of end-user operations, and reduction of both direct and contract labor costs.

SCAS's IT Department evaluated IBM Tivoli and Hitachi JP1/Software Distribution. It eventually chose the latter.

"In Hitachi JPI/SD, we found a rich set of features that more than matched our needs, a superior and highly intuitive user interface, ease of operation, and sensible pricing. What also impressed us were the effort made by Hitachi Asia to gain a clear understanding of our needs at the pre-sales stage and its strong commitment to support us across the geographical sphere of deployment," said Mr. Sato.

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Mr. Yasuhiro Sato
Deputy Dept. Manager
IT Department

HITACHI
Inspire the Next

Needs	• Increase efficiency of software distribution and patch management • Improve visibility of client PC resources • Reduce report-to-resolve cycle time for end-user issues • Lower administrative burden on regional and local IT teams
Solution	• Centralised and localised distribution of software using JP1/Software Distribution • Use of JP1/Remote Control to quickly identify and resolve end-user issues • Inventorying of client PC assets using JP1/Software Distribution
Benefits	• Automated and easy-to-schedule distribution of software • Time to distribute SAP R/3 patches reduced from days to hours • 50% drop in number of helpdesk enquiries needing at-desk support • Avoidance of additional IT headcount

About Sumitomo Corporation Asia Pte Ltd

A subsidiary of Sumitomo Corporation, Sumitomo Corporation Asia Pte. Ltd. is a leading trader and investor in steel products, machinery and electronics, chemicals, plastics, and petroleum and hydrocarbons. The company reported gross operating profit of US$45 million for the year 2005. Its technology needs are managed by its IT Department, which also oversees the IT operations of SCAS's sister companies in Southeast and Southwest Asia.

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Implementation work, for which Hitachi Asia dedicated a specialist, took under a week. One noteworthy aspect of SCAS's implementation of JP1/SD is that the solution is set up such that the IT team in Singapore is able to manage not just the PCs in Singapore but also those in the other countries via a JP1/SD component called Relay Manager. The first in ASEAN, this unique implementation does not mean that sites other than Singapore have no control over their own PCs – each can still manage its own PCs.

Days to Hours

With Hitachi JPI/SD in place, SCSA's IT Department now takes just a few hours to distribute new applications and SAP R/3 patches to all nine business entities in Southeast and Southwest Asia, compared with the one to two days previously needed for each location. The installation of the software is totally transparent to end-users, whose daily operations no longer have to be interrupted. For even greater convenience, distribution is normally scheduled for the end of the workday, with the exception being patches needed to fix problems which are distributed once they are available.

Benefits in the end-user support area are equally impressive. To start with, the capability of JP1/SD to retrieve and manage the inventory information hardware information, software installation status, and user specific inventory information – of each client PC in the network has given the regional and local IT teams early visibility of the assets they are

managing. With such pre-knowledge readily at hand, the report-to-resolve duration has been reduced.

In addition, using the Remote Control capability in JP1/SD, an IT team member can call up remote client PCs that need attention, use a file collection function to pull the relevant files, and use these to quickly respond to queries and solve problems without having to leave his or her desk.

Lower Admin Burden on IT

Together, the ready availability of inventory information and the remote access functions have resulted in at least a 50% drop in the number of helpdesk enquiries that require at-desk support.

"Overall, the administrative burden on the regional IT team has been reduced by 40-50%. This leaves us more time to devote to helping our business groups bring value to our clients and respond to marketplace dynamics.
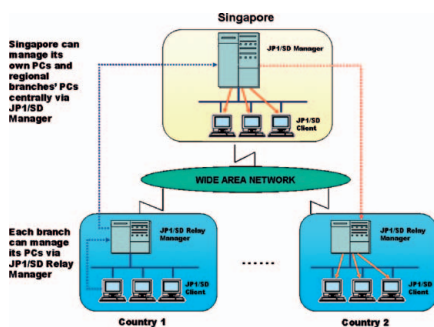
There is also no longer a need for additional labour," said Itaru Hirai, Senior IT Executive, IT Department. Added Mr. Sato, "we had carried on with our previous practices, it would have been a matter a time before we had to employ another hardware engineer in Singapore.

This additional headcount would have cost more than what we spent on JP1/SD. From that perspective alone, we have more than fully recovered our investment."

More importantly to SCAS, the minimal interruption to end-user operations and the rapid resolution of their PC problems has meant that they can, in turn, execute business processes in a timely manner and respond swiftly to customers' queries, thus shortening the supply chain and enhancing customer satisfaction.

Looking Ahead

Obviously highly satisfied with its use of JP1/SD, SCSI is now taking a closer look at its sister desktop management solution, JP1/Client Security Control (JP1/CSC), which centrally manages security measures on client PCs in accordance with security policy, determines appropriate security levels, and executes the actions necessary to meet these security levels.

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