



Allina Hospitals & Clinics Manage Laptops: Prevent Data Breaches with Computrace

11-hospital system achieves 98% IT asset auditing capability on mobile computers

Headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Allina Hospitals & Clinics (Allina) is an 11-hospital, 23,000-employee provider of health care services for citizens of Minnesota and Western Wisconsin. In support of the provider's leading approach to One Patient, One Record, Excellian electronic health record strategy, Allina makes extensive use of a fleet of laptop and tablet computers.

Having experienced a sharp increase in laptop theft including one incident requiring public disclosure of breached health information, Allina sought a high-tech. solution for laptop management and data breach protection. After a review of available products, Allina selected Computrace from Absolute Software. Using Computrace, IT staff have dramatically reduced laptop theft, recovered several stolen computers and improved laptop auditing accuracy from 30% to more than 95%. With Computrace as a complement to Allina's Utimaco encryption system, the provider is confident that it is delivering the highest level of protection for its laptop computers and the sensitive health information stored on them.

"Computrace makes managing laptops much safer and easier. We know immediately if a laptop begins to drift off our radar and can send the department manager a message asking them to investigate. If a computer is lost or stolen, Computrace is a lifeline. If we are concerned about the information on it, we use Computrace to remotely delete it. We can also use Computrace to verify that the computer's encryption was up to standard at the time of the theft. Finally, we can physically recover the computer – which puts everyone's mind at rest."

Brad Myrvold
Manager of Desktop Technology
Allina Healthcare

One Patient, One Record

As the state of Minnesota's major healthcare provider, Allina Hospitals & Clinics operates a system made up of 11 hospitals, more than 75 clinics, 15 community pharmacies, 5,000 physicians and 4 ambulatory care centers. In 2004, Allina began implementing Excellian One Patient, One Record – one of America's most comprehensive electronic health record systems. With the system available across all Allina facilities by 2009, One Patient One Record makes important medical information about each patient easily accessible to front-line caregivers.

The Movement Towards Mobility

In another demonstration of technology adoption, Allina is rapidly increasing the number of portable laptop and tablet computers they provide to nurses, physicians and other mobile employees to allow for better patient care. However, with the move toward portable computers, Allina's IT team found that computer theft and the potential of data breach became an increased concern.

According to Brad Myrvold, the hospital system's Manager of Desktop Technology, "Laptop computers are a powerful tool in the hands of a physician or a home care nurse. They put information right at the caregiver's fingertips and streamline administrative processes. Ultimately, they help our facilities deliver better patient experiences and outcomes. For the IT team however, they are a challenge. Our existing IT asset management system could only track assets that are on the network and these devices come back into our facilities at a fraction of the rate we are comfortable with. While we use Utimaco encryption on all of our mobile computers, there is always a risk that an unencrypted computer will be stolen. In fact, it was the theft of an unencrypted computer from a nurse that caused us to seek out Computrace in the first place."

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“Computrace immediately gave us visibility into our laptop population. We can see where the laptop is, who is logging in and what software is installed. It also allows us to verify that the laptop’s encryption is up to our standard – which is key for regulatory compliance. It has taken us from 30% IT asset auditing capability to well over 95% on computers that are outside our facilities.”

Brad Myrvold
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Data Breach

In one incident, an Allina nurse stopped her car in front of a hospital facility to run inside and deliver a time-sensitive package to waiting staff. While she was in the facility, a thief broke into her car and made off with a laptop – that contained the health information of several patients. As a result, the hospital system was required to publicly announce the data breach and provide credit monitoring services for the affected patients. “This incident was the event that triggered a change in how we managed portable devices,” says Myrvold. “Since we began to use laptops extensively, we had experienced a sharp increase in computer theft but this was the first time we had lost a laptop with this type of data on it. Laptop security was a potential hole in our otherwise robust data security strategy.” Two months after the data breach, Myrvold and his team began implementing Computrace IT asset management, theft recovery and data protection software on all of Allina’s mobile computers.

Computrace Secures Mobility

“Before Computrace, when we set up a new laptop for a physician or nurse, approximately 70% of the time we literally never saw that computer again. It would go off into our business units and sometimes returned when it was time for it to be replaced. We had no insight into what was happening,” says Myrvold. “Computrace immediately gave us visibility into our laptop population. We can see where the laptop is, who is logging in and what software is installed. It also allows us to verify that the laptop’s encryption is up to our standard – which is key for regulatory compliance. It has taken us from 30% IT asset auditing capability to well over 95% on computers that are outside our facilities.”

Each time a computer signs into the Allina network, it is automatically checked for device type. If a new laptop is detected, Computrace is automatically installed. According to Jeff Weeks, Allina Desktop Programming Senior, “From an administrator’s perspective, I have never seen such a seamless deployment. We automatically deployed more than 2,000 licenses across all of our mobile computers with absolutely no end user or administrator effort. We now use Computrace to track all of our laptops – more than 2,700 portable computers.”

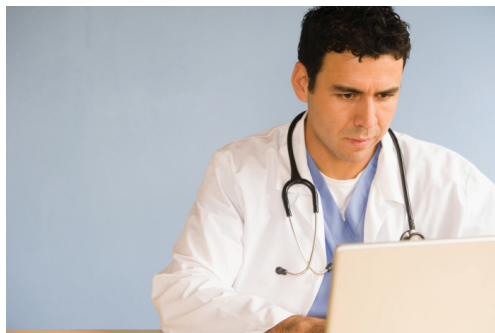
How It Works

The Computrace Agent is supported by a software agent built into the BIOS¹ of each computer during the manufacturing process. This agent calls into Absolute Software’s Monitoring Center daily to report information such as the computer’s physical location, installed software, virus protection and encryption status – it can even report missing hardware. This information populates the Absolute Online Customer Center interface used daily by Allina’s IT team.

When a computer equipped with Computrace is reported stolen, the Computrace Agent sends a silent signal over the Internet to Absolute’s Monitoring Center, providing critical location information. With BIOS support, the Computrace agent is capable of surviving operating system re-installations, as well as hard drive reformat, replacements and re-imaging.

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¹ For a complete list of BIOS-supported computers visit: www.absolute.com/products/bios-compatibility



Next Steps

Having experienced a sharp increase in laptop theft including one incident requiring public disclosure of breached health information, Allina sought a high-tech solution for laptop management and data breach protection. After a review of available products, Allina selected Computrace Complete with Remote Data Delete from Absolute Software. Using Computrace, IT staff have dramatically reduced laptop theft, recovered several stolen computers and improved laptop auditing accuracy from 30% to more than 95%.

Thefts Continued at Allina Facilities

Thefts continued however. In one particularly noteworthy incident, a thief entered an Allina facility one Saturday morning and made off with a laptop. The following day, Allina's IT team watched via the Absolute Customer Center as the computer went online in nearby Golden Valley. Shortly thereafter, it shut down again. On Tuesday, Allina staff and Absolute Investigators were shocked to see the laptop calling home from Vietnam with a new operating system and the new login credentials "Autoservice" and "Garage". Initially, the laptop was a challenge to recover given its location and Allina staff began to suspect that they would receive a Service Guarantee payment in compensation. With some amusement, Allina staff watched the laptop for more than three months before it abruptly returned to the United States.

"Most of our computer recoveries have gone incredibly smoothly," says Myrvold. "This particular recovery was very satisfying for all concerned. Once it was back in the U.S., Absolute's Theft Recovery Team immediately led police to the address and it was recovered. By a stroke of luck, police also found other computers that had been stolen before we had implemented Computrace on that device."

Layered Protection for Data Breach Prevention

With Computrace and Utimaco encryption in place, Allina is able to take advantage of laptop computers while delivering the highest standard of protection for its laptop computers and the sensitive information they may contain. "Computrace makes managing laptops much safer and easier," says Myrvold. "We know immediately if a laptop begins to drift off our radar and can send the department manager a message asking them to investigate. If a computer is lost or stolen, Computrace is a lifeline. If we are concerned about the information on it, we use Computrace to remotely delete it. We can also use Computrace to verify that the computer's encryption was up to standard at the time of the theft. Finally, we can physically recover the computer – which puts everyone's mind at rest."

About Absolute Computrace

Absolute Computrace by Absolute Software allows organizations to centrally track and secure their IT assets within a single cloud-based console – the Absolute Customer Center. They can easily identify computers and ultra-portable devices that have gone missing, enforce software policies, and maintain a fleet of optimally running devices. Most importantly, they can remotely invoke preemptive or reactive security measures to safeguard each device and the data it contains.

About Absolute Software

Absolute Software is the global leader in firmware-embedded persistent endpoint security and management solutions.

We provide organizations with comprehensive visibility and control over all of their endpoints – regardless of user or location. Our customers are able to optimize productivity, reduce operating costs, prove compliance, and remotely secure all of their devices and the corporate data they contain.

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