



Customer Snapshot: Exelon Nuclear

Paragon Powers Largest U.S. Provider of Nuclear Energy

The Challenge

Headquartered in Downer's Grove, Illinois, Exelon Nuclear operates the largest nuclear fleet in the nation and the third largest fleet in the world. Exelon's 10 stations -- with a total of 17 reactors -- represents approximately 20 percent of the U.S. nuclear industry's power capacity. The Exelon Nuclear Mid-Atlantic Regional Operating Group (ROG), located in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, provides governance, oversight, and support to four nuclear generating stations, which house six operating nuclear reactors located in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

According to Doug McGinnis, Manager, Infrastructure Services for Exelon, the energy industry has morphed into a more competitive marketplace where creative cost cutting has become a necessity. Exelon Nuclear's management team turned to McGinnis and his IT team to leverage the latest technologies to increase savings for the rest of the company. "With the proliferation of server-hosted applications, there has been an increased reliance on the network infrastructure, especially for storing more data and keeping records secure. We are storing more data than ever before, especially millions of paper drawings, making information security a big piece of the puzzle," said McGinnis. "It is imperative for us to keep users to a minimum in terms of server access."

With this expanded reliance on Exelon's network infrastructure, McGinnis' IT environment required the deployment of more servers. To control these servers, McGinnis initially opted for off the shelf KVM products. However, these KVM products proved to be unreliable and incompatible with the various hardware platforms in the data center. He also needed remote access to the network, and his current solutions were lacking in that department as well.

Customer:

Exelon Nuclear

Challenge:

Largest U.S. operator of nuclear power plants needed a KVM solution for multi-platform support and a remote access option to control and access servers.

Solution:

Raritan's Paragon Remote KVM solution

Benefits:

Exelon Nuclear saved manpower and overhead costs while maximizing uptime through remote access to servers.



"We looked at Avocent and Rose [Electronics], but Raritan was the most cost effective for a data center of our size."

The Solution

McGinnis selected Raritan's award winning Paragon® with Cat5 Simplicity™ and the IP-Reach™ TR-Series remote access option. "We reviewed all the options and determined that Raritan was one of the few vendors who could provide a complete solution that could handle the ubiquitous nature of our data center and its disparate technologies," he said. "Plus, having remote access to the console provided the flexibility and security to work on our boxes using an out-of-band connection for BIOS level control."

Since September 2002, Paragon has been "powering" Exelon's data center in Kennett Square that consists of 23 servers - 20 Wintel servers, two UNIX servers and one Sun server. "We looked at Avocent, and Rose [Electronics], but Raritan was the most cost-effective for a data center of our size," said McGinnis.

McGinnis has experienced no performance issues and is quite happy with the Raritan solution. "We love the security levels offered by Paragon and IP-Reach, especially the 128-bit SSL encryption and RADIUS-enabled authentication. With the Raritan solutions, we can configure group management and different levels of administration beyond the security built into the server itself," McGinnis added. "Previously, anyone could pull up a console connection to any server in the data center. Now, there are two levels of authorization before gaining access to the servers."



Raritan Computer, Inc., founded in 1985, is the leading provider of KVM (keyboard/video/mouse) and remote management solutions for access and control of servers and other network devices. With 18 consecutive years of profitable growth and technical innovation, Raritan makes products that are used to control millions of servers at more than 35,000 network data centers, computer test labs, and multi-workstation environments around the world. From the small business to the enterprise, Raritan's complete line of compatible and scalable KVM and remote connectivity products offers IT professionals the most reliable, flexible, and secure out of band solutions to manage data center equipment, while improving operational productivity.

The Results

McGinnis has seen significant savings in manpower and overhead for management of the servers. "We are unable to have administrators on duty 24/7 and the Raritan solution is as close to providing that network support as possible. We have seen substantial increases in productivity, while easing the burdens on our limited IT staff," said McGinnis. "I can sit at my desk and do configuration changes on the fly as if I were in front of the box."

McGinnis recently encountered a situation where the remote access functionality of IP-Reach was invaluable. He tried to access one of his Windows 2000 servers through Windows Terminal Services on a Sunday afternoon to reboot. After five minutes, the box did not respond. McGinnis then accessed the Raritan Paragon from home and received a bad boot device error message indicating that a floppy disk was left in the server drive. He was able to remotely reconfigure the BIOS to bypass the floppy drive in the boot sequence and bring the server back up to fully operational - all without leaving his living room. According to McGinnis, one of his LAN administrators had a similar experience with a Lotus Notes server. In this case, a virtual connection was locked up and prevented the administrator from controlling the server. From home, she was able to access the Paragon remotely and initiated a reboot from NT that brought the server back up to fully operational. "We view the Raritan solution as a productivity enhancement device that gives our administrators more flexibility and enables them to multitask on other IT projects."

The Future

McGinnis saw this initial engagement with Raritan as a pilot program and intends to rollout the Paragon and IP-Reach products to 11 other Exelon Nuclear data centers. "The ability to have administrative access throughout our entire organization will help us immensely by maximizing productivity and enabling us to troubleshoot any IT issues remotely."

When you're ready to take control, do it with Raritan.

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