



Wholesale Chain Saves 700-Mile Troubleshooting Trips by Relocating its Servers

A chain of six wholesale jewelry stores spread across Nevada and Utah experienced the problems typical of SOHO networks and regional chains: short staffs needing to make long trips to update, troubleshoot and manage servers at each branch; repair delays associated with that travel; high costs of cabling; and servers – typically sharing space with office workers – cranking out too much heat for comfort. The chain ran each site's point-of-sale, digital security-camera recording, and inventory applications on three servers in the back office of each store.

Brandon Murphy, who runs BMP Technical Services, in Las Vegas, was the chain's systems integrator and IT installer, and felt the pain of his client's geographical dispersion first-hand: "By having each store have its own servers, we were doing two things I did not like: One, driving all over the place (a range of close to 700 miles) for updates, and two, having large amounts of transaction data stored miles away from immediate help (one in-house IT administrator) in case of failure."

Murphy found the answer when he discovered Raritan's switchless, single-target KVM-over-IP solution, the Dominion® KX101. Using Dominion KX101s at each server to provide remote administrative access, he was able to relocate all of the stores' servers to a single site in the home of the chain's owner.

From 700 to zero miles for updates

KVM-over-IP was a critical component of the centralization, because server-side updates to the chain's applications require BIOS-level access to pass security checks, and the IT administrator must be able to access the servers from any of the six stores. That can't be accomplished with Windows Terminal Services. Neither can troubleshooting or rebooting.

"We used the Dominion KX101 to give the chain's lone IT person console (KVM) access from anywhere, with a Web browser, while the rest of the staff and salespeople use custom-built Web applications in the stores," says Brandon. "We made a single stop point for updates, and a more secure site to hold business transactions." Brandon and the chain's IT admin can only log into the Dominion KX101 through the company's VPN, which provides an additional layer of security.

Once all of the servers were up and running in the same location, the jewelry wholesaler was able to determine that the servers were running at only about 10% of their processing capacity.

Customer:

Six-store Jewelry Wholesaler, Las Vegas, NV

Reseller/System Integrator:

BMP Technical Services, Las Vegas

The Problem:

- A one-man IT staff incurred high travel costs and risks of downtime maintaining and troubleshooting servers in six far-flung branch offices
- In-store servers generated too much heat for workers' comfort, cabling costs

Solution:

Dominion KX101 single-target, switchless KVM-over-IP

Benefits:

- Servers relocated to central office, physically close to IT staffer
- Remote BIOS-level KVM access provides staffer anytime, anywhere access and control
- Physical aggregation permitted server consolidation, spare servers reallocated to a test network at no cost

This allowed them to consolidate their applications onto one third as many servers, which, in turn, freed up the remaining servers to be configured to serve as both hot spares and a parallel test network, at zero cost.

Savings on servers and cabling

With the number of servers reduced to six, and with space extremely scarce in the home-based server room, the palm-sized Dominion KX101s were the most economical and practical choice for remote access. They required no rack space, were each much less expensive than a multi-port KVM switch would have been, and gave the wholesaler unlimited options should he want to relocate any server anywhere along his network. Should a server be moved, its remote access solution will move along with it. By the same token, because they're not switches, the Dominion KX101s also eliminated the need for switch-to-server cabling; each device connects directly to the server and to the chain's LAN.

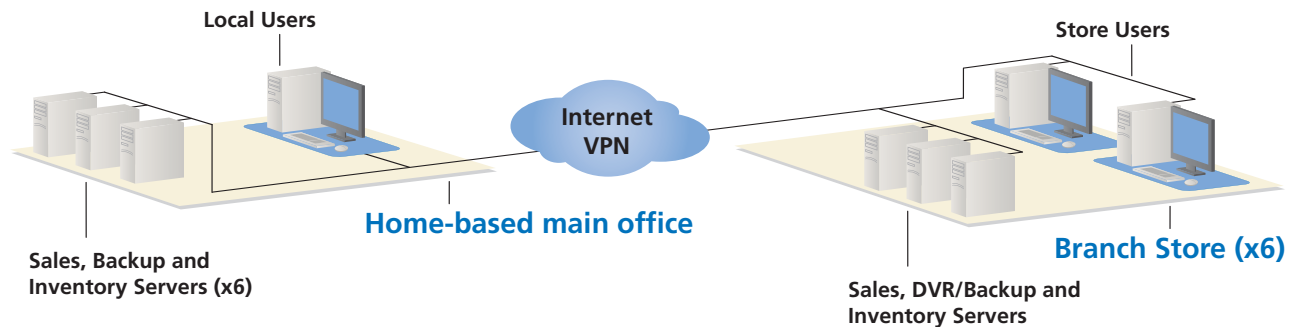
Success Stories - Jewelry Wholesaler

Centralizing servers generally saves his clients on installation, Brandon says. "No servers in each branch means less cabling from front offices to the server room in the back of the store. Less cabling means fewer drops to install, at \$75 to \$150 or more per drop. When the back rooms are made of concrete or subject to stiff building codes, that saves significant money. Some of our clients' buildings are in a "Utah Historic District," where it's illegal to have any visible external conduit at all. So, especially in Salt Lake City, we save a ton of money by not having to run cable for the servers."

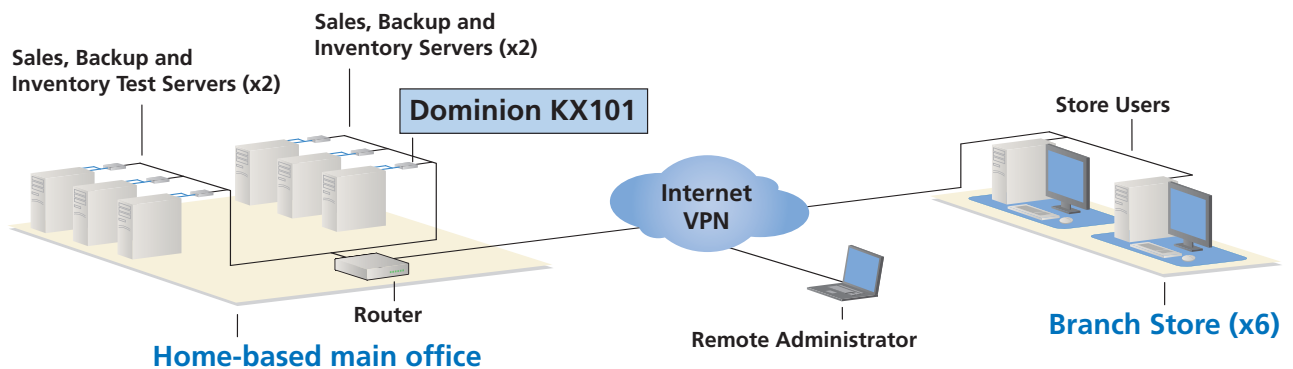
Finally, with store workers no longer forced to share workspace with servers, "it also saved my customer the headache of hearing employees complain that the office was too hot!" says Brandon.

By providing remote, BIOS-level access at a price an SMB could tolerate, Murphy's use of Dominion KX101 made it possible for this chain store to relocate, centralize, and then consolidate its servers, producing an entire test network out of idled machines. The move saved more money and shortened mean time to repair by eliminating long drives and emergency flights to update and repair servers. Finally, the Dominion KX101 KVM devices solved cabling, heat, and security issues in the bargain, by eliminating cabling and keeping servers and sensitive transaction data in one secure place.

Before



After



Raritan, Inc. is a leading supplier of solutions for managing IT infrastructure equipment and the mission-critical applications and services that run on it. Raritan was founded in 1985, and since then has been making products that are used to manage IT infrastructures at more than 50,000 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 IT management solutions offers IT professionals the most reliable, flexible and secure in-band and out-of-band solutions to manage data center equipment applications and services, while improving operational productivity. More information on the company is available at Raritan.com.

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