

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

ALABAMA ONE CREDIT UNION

Proving the Value of Proactive Network Management with WhatsUp Gold since 2005

Benefits to Alabama One of the WhatsUp Gold Network Management Solution

- 24x7 network monitoring of headquarters and a 9-branch, multi-county network
- Real-time status using 738 monitors of over 132 critical network devices
- Multiple formats for alerts and notifications
- Smooth, quick integration of two new branch locations acquired in 2009 merger
- IT can pinpoint, troubleshoot and resolve nearly all issues before they impact users or members
- Continuous network tuning for optimal performance
- Improved management of vendor SLAs because of uptime report data
- Ability to proactively manage network resources via WhatsUp Gold reporting

Chartered in 1951 with just \$35 in assets, Alabama One today is a multi-million dollar full-service financial institution headquartered in Tuscaloosa with 10 locations throughout the state.

In 2009 it merged with Alabama 1st Capital Credit Union, expanding new members by 10,000 and growing assets by more than \$50 million, while adding two branch locations.

Network Monitoring Challenges Met Easily with WhatsUp Gold

Adding the new branch locations to Alabama One's network after the merger was straightforward and fast, with the install aided by WhatsUp Gold. It was not the first time a network install proceeded painlessly at the credit union, according to Chris Koskodan, Network Administrator.

Koskodan joined Alabama One in 2005. At that time the financial institution had no network monitoring solution in place whatsoever. During his first week on the job, a router outage cut off an entire branch of the credit union for one full day.

IT management worked frantically to troubleshoot the problem without any monitoring tools.

"After that experience it was essential that we find a way to maintain normal operations of all branches," says Koskodan. "With a network spanning multiple counties, it was time for a 24x7 monitoring and management solution."

From his previous employment Koskodan was familiar with WhatsUp Gold as well as another network monitoring system. *"I knew that WhatsUp Gold was by far the more cost effective and less complicated solution."* He wasted no time in arranging a demonstration for senior management.

Approval came quickly and Alabama One's two-person network management team installed WhatsUp Gold seamlessly on a dedicated Windows XP desktop.

"Within minutes of completing the install, the network was discovered," states Koskodan. "The benefits were immediate. For the first time we could monitor the status of all business critical network devices in real time —and hear an audible alert the minute there's an issue."

Client Statistics

- Industry: Banking and Finance
- 24x7 monitoring of 10 credit union locations
- 132 critical network devices
- 738 real-time monitors
- 2-person network management team
- WhatsUp Gold customer since 2005
- www.alabamaone.org

“*For five years WhatsUp Gold has worked perfectly for us. It delivers all the features and functionality we expect and need in order to maintain network uptime for our members. To put it simply: without WhatsUp Gold I would not be able to get my job done.*”

*- Chris Koskodan,
network administrator,
Alabama One Credit Union*

Because the IT department required customizations to the WhatsUp Gold setup—including an SQL back end and multiple redundant systems—Koskodan turned to the support team at Ipswitch, Inc.'s Network Management Division for telephone assistance. *"They were a tremendous help. I would ask, 'Is there a way to do X,' and they'd say, 'yes, and here are the steps.'"*

Continuous Uptime and Performance Improvement

Since the 2005 installation, comprehensive reporting capabilities in WhatsUp Gold have enabled Alabama One to continuously improve network uptime and performance. Today the benefits of the WhatsUp Gold's monitoring—and in particular its reporting—are indisputable.

"We make extensive use of the reports," Koskodan explains. *"In fact, when I show our reports to vendors, they are blown away. We look at bandwidth and peak times and we set thresholds—our goal is to manage the network proactively. For example our hard drives now all have thresholds set that notify us if we have a potential problem. Troubleshooting is greatly improved—even for phantom problems."*

As a result of making maximum use of WhatsUp Gold reports, Koskodan can show quantifiable benefits to credit union management—all of whom are also members.

If IT gets a user complaint, for example about the email server being offline, the network management team can check the statistics and respond with facts. Because of this ability, the value of network management is much clearer to users and senior management.

Reports are also used extensively to track SLAs. According to Koskodan, *"We now check our vendor SLAs against actual performance numbers. In the past, we had no way to monitor vendor stats ourselves—we had to rely on what the vendors told us. With WhatsUp Gold we now have the hard numbers and can hold vendors to their promises."*

Multiple Formats for Alerts and Notifications

The network management team also values WhatsUp Gold's ability to offer a variety of alert and notification formats. During the business day, visual, audible and email alerts provide most of the notifications. But after hours the WhatsUp Gold system uses text messages and phone calls with voicemail every 10 seconds to ensure that problems are addressed immediately.

"No matter how soundly you sleep, you are not going to ignore a phone call every 10 seconds," Koskodan says. *"This way we can respond to problems quickly so that when the credit union opens for business at 8 a.m., it's ready to process member transactions."*

Since installing WhatsUp Gold nearly 5 years ago, network downtime has been reduced to near zero. When unplanned downtime does occur, the IT staff is no longer caught off-guard, because they're fully aware of how all components perform, even during peak periods.

"The beauty of WhatsUp Gold is there are no more surprises," comments Koskodan. *"In IT you are not a profit center. No one thinks about you until something breaks. But if you set up your network correctly and monitor it with a solution like WhatsUp Gold, you prevent the big problems. Then most of your job is about how well you do the monitoring and how proactively you can plan and add the right improvements. I love it when I've worked from 2 a.m. to 4 a.m. fixing something and no one else even realized a problem existed—that's the way it should be."*

About The Network Management Division of Ipswitch, Inc.

The Network Management Division of Ipswitch, Inc. is the developer of the WhatsUp Gold suite of innovative IT Management software. Over 100,000 networks worldwide— in small, medium and enterprise businesses— use WhatsUp Gold to assure the availability, health and security of their critical business infrastructure. WhatsUp Gold was named Network Management Product of 2010 by Network Computing Magazine and earned the Network Products Guide 2010 Product Innovation Award in Network Management. To learn more about WhatsUp Gold or download a free trial,

please visit:

www.whatsupgold.com/products/download

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