

## Case study

# HP helps NEHU simplify management of multi-vendor network



## HP Intelligent Management Center simplifies multi-vendor network management

### Industry

Education

### Objective

Increase network capabilities with new switches and associated hardware

### Approach

Put out tender to multiple vendors, and score responses on specific factors, including price, performance and service

### IT matters

- Simplified management of multi-vendor network with HP Intelligent Management Center (IMC)
- Cut troubleshooting time by 50 percent due to HP IMC's single-screen interface
- Maximized uptime with fast, efficient identification and resolution of issues via IMC

### Business matters

- Enabled large campus to be cost-effectively managed by small IT team, due to time-efficient IMC solution
- Minimized risk of unanticipated repair and replacement costs due to HP lifetime warranty
- Kept costs low with cost-effective HP network solution



**“Overall, HP IMC saves us around 50 percent of the time involved in troubleshooting and fixing a problem; in most cases we can resolve issues purely from within IMC and it helps us to keep downtime to a minimum.”**

– Ivan Lyngdoh, technical officer, North-Eastern Hill University



## North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU) halves problem resolution times with HP Software

After adding new switches to its campus infrastructure, NEHU needed to manage hardware from multiple vendors. By using HP Intelligent Management Center software, the university's IT team can control the network from one screen, which saves time and simplifies management. Troubleshooting time is halved, helping to maximize uptime.



## Challenge

### Increased network demands

North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU) is an educational establishment based in Shillong, the capital city of the Indian state of Meghalaya in the north-east of the country. There are 53 undergraduate colleges affiliated to the university, with a total of 18,000 undergraduate students enrolled. There are 1,700 postgraduate students and the university has over 300 academic staff.

At its main Shillong site, the campus buildings are connected with a high speed 1Gbps link that carries both voice and data. The network is used for multiple applications, including the university's ERP system for administration, web and mail server traffic, and provides access to a digital repository of academic journals.

Until recently, the infrastructure was built around switches from Extreme Networks but demands for more equipment and connectivity from its computer lab and other departments meant that additional switches were needed. Rather than just buy more hardware from its existing supplier, NEHU distributed a tender to multiple vendors, that included a requirement for managing both new and legacy switches.

Ivan Lyngdoh, technical officer, NDVN Facility (VSAT) and Convener, Implementation Committee on e-governance at North-Eastern Hill University, says, "Our tender specified that we needed a network management solution that could manage switches from multiple vendors."

## Solution

### Better price performance

Having reviewed the responses, NEHU selected 30 HP ProCurve L2 Switches and HP Intelligent Management Center (IMC) Standard Edition software to provide an easy-to-use management solution both for the HP equipment and the Extreme switches already at the campus.

"Our main choice was between HP, Cisco, Extreme and D-Link," says Lyngdoh. "We chose HP because it had the highest overall rating in the tender process, which included scores for price, service and performance.

"As a government institution, price and performance is always important to us, and when we compared HP with other brands it came out well. We have also had good past experiences with HP, and it has an excellent service infrastructure compared with other vendors both locally here in the North-East of India, and in Kolkata."



He added, “HP provided a lifetime warranty, where other vendors only offered three years.”

In an earlier requirement, NEHU had chosen the E-Infrastructure Solution and the University Management System (UMS), and these solutions include 16 HP ProLiant BL460c server blades, two HP BL870c, a HP BL860c housed in two BladeSystem c7000 enclosures, HP SAN switches, and an HP StorageWorks EVA4400 enterprise virtual array. Various companies represented IBM for the solution.

## Benefits

### Centralized management

Previously, NEHU had used Extreme Networks’ management software for its switches, but now with the HP IMC solution it can manage the Extreme switches and the new HP switches from a single interface. In total, the university uses IMC to manage a network of approximately 100 switches, including a mixture of 48- and 24-port devices that provide connectivity for 3,000 users.

“With the HP IMC solution, I can manage the entire network topology and immediately see if everything is working properly,” says Lyngdoh. “HP IMC lets me carry out common tasks such as configuring switch throughput, and enabling or disabling devices.

“The two main benefits of HP IMC have been enabling the centralized management of multiple vendors’ switches, and saving time: instead of having to swap between several pieces of software, I now use one application to manage the entire network. We only have an IT team of four people for an infrastructure that is spread across a campus that is almost two miles wide, so fast troubleshooting is important; without IMC I might have to go out to physically see a switch, which is very time-consuming. Now, I only have to look at one screen to know if a switch is down, regardless of whether it’s Extreme or HP, and I get all the alarms in one window.”

## Customer solution at a glance

### Applications

Digital library of academic journals  
Enterprise resource planning (ERP) system for administration  
Apache web server  
Open source mail server  
Open source applications for internet sharing, library access and other tasks

### Hardware

- HP ProLiant BL460c server blade
- HP BladeSystem c7000 enclosure
- HP 8/24 SAN Switch
- HP StorageWorks EVA4400 enterprise virtual array
- HP ProCurve Switches

### Software

- HP Intelligent Management Center (IMC) Standard Edition

He continues, “Overall, HP IMC saves us around 50 percent of the time previously taken to troubleshoot and fix a problem; in most cases we can resolve issues purely from within HP IMC and it helps us keep downtime to a minimum.”

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Reliability has been good, with Lyngdoh seeing no major issues with the HP equipment, and he comments, “When I’ve had minor problems, HP has responded within a few hours – and then the equipment is back up and running the same day or the next day, with a replacement part where needed.”

For the future, Lyngdoh is planning to add virtualization to his network, while continuing to use HP IMC as the infrastructure develops. He concludes, “We have already seen strong, measurable benefits from HP IMC, and there are still many features we have not yet explored, so we are looking forward to exploiting its full potential.”

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