

» Case Study: Indiana Health Information Exchange

American Digital leverages vtAlpha and MSCS to provide healthcare to thousands

“ We were working on a very tight deadline that was outside our control,” said John Kansky, Executive Director of IHIE. “The services supported by the Alpha emulation are utilized by thousands of healthcare providers serving tens of thousands of patients every day. American Digital met the project objectives and delivered on what they promised.”

- John Kansky, Executive Director of IHIE

Better visibility drives better results

The Indiana Health Information Exchange (IHIE) operates on the principle that better outcomes result when healthcare providers have a comprehensive view of the patient that goes beyond treatment by a single provider. American Digital operates on a similar principle: technology solutions that look beyond short-term, tactical answers can address business challenges in more innovative and effective ways to drive real business value for clients over the long term. By looking beyond the obvious, IHIE and American Digital collaborated on a managed service solution that went far beyond initial expectations for a data center migration to provide a more resilient operating environment that performs reliably, costs less and is easier to manage.

Transparency in patient care enables improved care coordination and healthier outcomes

As easy as it is to pop an aspirin to relieve a random ache, short-term relief won't necessarily prevent a recurring issue, identify the underlying cause or cure the ill. That requires a wide-angle view and a longer-term perspective. That is exactly what IHIE does for healthcare providers. It offers transparency across providers, enabling them to view a more comprehensive picture of patient care without the inevitable barriers raised when patients are treated in traditional silos. IHIE operates the nation's largest health information exchange, providing a secure and robust statewide health information technology network that connects more than 90 hospitals, long-term care facilities, rehabilitation centers, community health clinics and other healthcare providers throughout Indiana. Providing information in a secure, standardized and electronic format, IHIE enables information to follow the patient across the entire healthcare system to improve care coordination and health outcomes.

IHIE Project Overview



Indiana Health Information Exchange

INDUSTRY

Healthcare

OBJECTIVE

IHIE was initially looking for an environment assessment, a migration strategy and the design and execution of a solution to host, operate and maintain its current environment while its technology team investigated a longer-term, next-generation solution that would support the organization's growth strategy.

AMERICAN DIGITAL APPROACH

Bundled service integrating multiple technologies and vendors, consisting of three key components:

- Migration Services
- OpenVMS Managed Services
- Managed Data Center Services

TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENTS

With new HP X86 enterprise servers clustered together and backed by enterprise HP storage, IHIE's new emulated environment is:

- Running vtAlpha VMS emulation software
- Protected by firewalls and intrusion detection systems
- Housed in a Tier 3+ data center
- Connected the customer's network to the campus of remote hospitals

BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Seamless migration with little impact to business operations
- Greater availability of critical business applications
- Reduced operating costs
- Single point of responsibility and accountability

Balancing fast-acting pain relief with sustainable improvement

When IHIE was faced with an infrastructure headache, American Digital provided the visibility and innovative thinking to engineer a solution that addressed its immediate needs and led to significant improvements in its operating environment.

American Digital Solution Snapshot

- >> **Migration Services.** Moved IHIE from legacy systems to AVT/VERE virtual environment
- >> **OpenVMS Managed Services.** Managed operating system (OpenVMS) and emulation software (vtAlpha) via MSCS services
- >> **Managed Data Center Services.** Provided facilities and infrastructure to run systems and connect all to IHIE hospitals

IHIE housed its data center systems in a multi-purpose public facility that was scheduled for a massive retrofit, necessitating relocation of all operations, including IHIE's data center. The timeline was fixed and the budget was limited. IHIE needed a virtually seamless migration solution that would not disrupt ongoing operations and would not be an over-investment in a legacy environment that would soon need a complete overhaul. IHIE's goals for the project were to maintain steady-state performance with existing systems for another two years while its IT team investigated a longer-term, next-generation solution that would support the organization's growth strategy.

A less than satisfying response from all but American Digital

IHIE was initially looking for an environment assessment, a migration strategy, and the design and execution of a solution to host, operate and maintain its current environment. All but one response to its call for help represented disjointed pieces of the puzzle but no comprehensive, all-in-one solution. Choosing any of these point solutions would have meant cobbling together individual components and siloed offerings from a consortium of companies. Ultimate responsibility would rest with IHIE and any subsequent issues, related to coverage gaps, vendor disputes, service interruptions, etc., would require additional time, cost and effort on IHIE's part to resolve and manage.

When a technology solution creates more work and complexity than it was designed to solve, it likely is not an ideal solution. Even the most complex technology should simplify the work you do. That was American Digital's goal for IHIE.

An unexpected and innovative approach from American Digital

The approach American Digital took was different. American Digital was the only solution provider willing to take on the job of finding the best facility and the best partners to collaborate with in executing a comprehensive solution that would be delivered as a bundled service to IHIE. Undeterred by a stretched budget or a rigid timeline, American Digital recommended three integrated components to migrate and maintain the complete data center:

>> Migration Services

Simultaneously move (7) IHIE critical systems to new emulated environment

>> OpenVMS Managed Services

Manage old operating system (OpenVMS) and emulation software (vtAlpha) using MS Consulting Services

>> Managed Data Center Services

Provide facilities and infrastructure to run systems and connect all to IHIE hospitals

The solution represents the application of multiple technologies and the input of multiple vendors, all managed by American Digital. Based on strong collaboration and an in-depth requirements assessment and evaluation, the solution satisfies all of IHIE's needs in terms of funding, timing, levels of service, etc.

A custom-fit solution

IHIE was looking for a partner to take a problem off their hands. American Digital delivered a comprehensive solution that modernized IHIE data center operations, and exceeded the client's initial expectations. American Digital created a customized package of technology services, based on the customer's unique environment rather than force-feeding a single preferred vendor's preconfigured solution. Today, IHIE runs its legacy system on modern equipment in a new location with American Digital assuming responsibility for the security and reliability of an operating environment that is the equivalent of a Tier 3+ data center.

The added value of experience and innovative thinking

According to American Digital Account Manager Ken Williams, “We understood that IHIE’s ultimate aim was a secure and reliable data center, despite the instability of working with an older system and the typical challenges you can encounter with any major migration. When the performance of your data center impacts people’s health and their very lives, you need dependable technology.” As experts in infrastructure design, data center operations and application/system modernization, American Digital had the experience to safely and efficiently handle the move. Its expertise in infrastructure managed services also could enhance post-move data center operations for IHIE. The additional value American Digital brought to IHIE was the product of innovative thinking in how to configure a solution designed to generate sustainable value. “We wanted to do more than simply move outdated systems from one location to another. That would be like exchanging a headache for a backache if we hadn’t addressed the underlying causes of pain,” explains Williams.

Moving beyond location to impact performance and efficiency

IHIE had several VMS systems running on aging Alpha hardware. To keep it stable, the first thing American Digital did was put IHIE’s environment on a modern X86 platform. Secondly, it added a layer of sophisticated software from AVT/VERE to emulate the older technology without actually touching it. Finally, American Digital moved the data center and assumed responsibility for it, providing IHIE with a modern approach without the worry of continued use of the legacy infrastructure. Competitors had offered space or ongoing support services or emulation services, but no other vendor was offering a comprehensive solution.

Going forward as partners in excellence

From initial assessment through the crucial hours of migration to a successful steady state took approximately nine months. During that time, American Digital and IHIE maintained excellent lines of communication, developing deep bonds of trust that helped lay a strong foundation for collaboration. As a result, American Digital continues to:

- »» Maintain the IHIE infrastructure in the Tier 3+ data center
- »» Operate and maintain the emulation software
- Support IHIE’s VMS operating system needs

ABOUT INDIANA HEALTH INFORMATION EXCHANGE

The Indiana Health Information Exchange (IHIE) is a non-profit organization that operates the nation’s largest health information exchange, providing a secure and robust statewide health information technology network that connects more than 90 hospitals, long-term care facilities, rehabilitation centers, community health clinics and other healthcare providers in Indiana. Known as Indiana’s health information “super highway,” this network serves an area with a population of about six million people and more than 25,000 physicians throughout the country. IHIE’s biggest commitment is to make sure patient information is private and secure.

ABOUT AMERICAN DIGITAL

American Digital is an advanced IT solution provider that helps organizations harness the power of complex technology solutions. Focused on data center optimization, transformation, consolidation, virtualization and cloud solutions, American Digital is a trusted advisor to clients in need of business-critical enterprise computing.

American Digital provides custom system integration and consulting services across a complete set of enterprise server, storage and networking products. With a depth and breadth of expertise honed over 30 years, American Digital provides technical analysis, manufacturer comparisons and solution recommendations covering the entire IT lifecycle.

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