

## LEADING UTILITY SERVICES BUSINESS HALTS DEVICE LOSS AND RETHINKS SECURITY POLICY WITH ABSOLUTE<sup>®</sup> COMPUTRACE

ThinkPads equipped with the Computrace anti-theft software enable effective loss prevention.



### Introduction

Morrison Utility Services has 3,500 employees. The company's headquarters are in Stevenage in Hertfordshire, UK.

The company has a fleet of Lenovo and other computer devices. Of these, around 800 laptops and 100 rugged tablets are used by staff who need to work remotely, either at a project site, at a client site or another Morrison Utility Services office around the UK.

### Challenges

It is Graeme Cross, Head of Business Systems and Development at Morrison Utility Services, who has to ensure that all computing assets – hardware, software and data – are fully protected. The company has a number of security systems and policies in place to ensure that these assets are protected. But it was the disappearance of various computing devices that led Cross to start investigating if there was a way of preventing this kind of loss.

Cross says, "We weren't quite sure how to deal with this problem so we did a simple Internet search to see what was available and that's when we found out about Computrace from Absolute Software. At first it sounded too good to be true, the fact that Computrace could recover a device and even track it down to within a few metres of its actual location."

Morrison Utility Services decided to run a trial and deployed Computrace on 100 of its Lenovo laptops. During the trial period a laptop was stolen and the loss was reported to the police and the Absolute Theft Recovery Team. Working with the police, the Recovery team was able to pinpoint the laptops location and recover it. When it was returned, Morrison Utility Services found that it had been completely wiped, removing the operating system and all the data.

Cross says, "We were so surprised at how effective Computrace was and that it enabled us to recover the stolen device. The fact that Computrace could recover the laptop was key, because in the past when a device was stolen the hard disk would be wiped and that would be it. Because the Computrace agent is built into the firmware and is able to send back information to Absolute, it was possible to locate the device and recover it."

### Solution

Following the success of the trial, Morrison Utility Services has activated Computrace on 800 laptops and 100 rugged tablets.

These tablets are 3G and Wi-Fi enabled and fixed into vans and used out in the field on construction sites to access information, such as drawings and job-related information. Computrace is especially important for these tablets because each one costs £2,000 and it takes a long time to replace and set up these devices. Morrison Utility Services has looked at other security solutions but the key feature that stood out about Computrace was the fact that was firmware embedded, so that even if the disk is wiped, the Computrace agent remains intact.

### CUSTOMER PROFILE

Morrison Utility Services is the UK's leading utility service provider. It works with utility companies in the electricity, gas, water and telecommunications sectors helping them renew, refurbish and maintain their infrastructure and networks.

The company's business is centred upon the provision, replacement, repair and maintenance of utility network infrastructure, for example: electricity substations, water and gas pipes, electricity and telecommunication cables and installation of water, electricity and gas meters on behalf of clients. Replacement of Victorian water and sewage mains is one of Morrison Utility Services' projects.



"I think it is so good that Lenovo allows the Computrace agent to be installed in the firmware of their equipment at the factory. Computer theft has been a big problem everywhere and this is a practical, pragmatic solution and Lenovo should be applauded for enabling it."

#### GRAEME CROSS

Head of Business Systems & Development,  
Morrison Utility Services

"Overall, the product quality and reliability of the Lenovo ThinkPad plus the security protection that Computrace provides a very high comfort level due to reduced downtime and the assurance that the hardware and data is well protected."

- Graeme Cross



Lenovo® ThinkPad® T430 laptop

Morrison Utility Services uses Computrace primarily to track and recover missing and stolen devices. But the company is also using it to audit computer equipment out in the field. When Morrison Utility Services is working on a project for a client, it supplies staff with computers, but the client will install their own systems and applications on the computers for security and so Morrison Utility Services staff can access client information needed for the project.

This means that Morrison Utility Services' usual auditing system is not on the computers, so the Computrace agent – which remains in the firmware – is used to send back information about each device to check its location and how it is being used.

Computrace is also used to track down equipment that may have disappeared from the Morrison Utility Services' network through innocent loss, such as being mislaid by the user, left in a cupboard or shared with another member of staff.

One step that Morrison Utility Services has taken since installing Computrace is to put an article in the company newsletter about Computrace and how effective it is at recovering lost and stolen equipment. Cross says, "I think this is having an effect. We've not had any further incidences of equipment loss."

Morrison Utility Services also uses the alert facility in Computrace. If the operating system changes or the device starts broadcasting from an unknown IP address, the Computrace agent will send an alert that something unusual has happened to the device.

It means Morrison Utility Services is able to spot signs that a device might have been stolen, possibly even before the user realises it is missing.

"This sort of capability is terrific for us because in the past we've gone looking for a device but often so much time has passed that people can't remember where the device was left. But Computrace helps you find out pretty much straight away that it's gone and where it's broadcasting from and then it's much easier to find."

### Business Results

"I've worked in IT for 25 years and for the first time using Computrace we have had a stolen device recovered. Usually, if it's stolen, it's gone. For me Computrace did exactly what it said on the tin. I had disbelieved what Computrace could do until the stolen device turned up on my desk," says Cross.

Computrace is also saving Morrison Utility Services money from not having to replace equipment, but also by cutting out the time it takes to replace and set up new equipment.

Computrace also saves time having to track down lost equipment. The company has around 90 sites across the UK and even though staff should not, they swap kit around, which can then end up in different parts of the country.

Computrace is helping Morrison Utility Services rethink some of its security strategies. Instead of having tablet devices permanently fixed into a van, the company is considering making them mobile.

If one of these devices is stolen it has to be wrenched out of the docking bay in the van and destruction of this equipment and likely damage to the tablet is expensive.

Cross says, "Computrace is starting to change our attitude and approach to how we apply security.

With Computrace we're confident that we can get the device back, so if someone is going to steal it then let it be in such a way that it or the docking equipment is not damaged."

"Computrace is terribly important to our business. Like other security products and systems you don't appreciate how valuable it is until you have it. And once you see what Computrace can do, you don't want to be without it. We could have gone on for another year or two without Computrace, carried on losing kit and being frustrated by our inability to respond quickly or recover it. Now I've had the taste of actually being able to get something back and better manage our assets I wouldn't want to be without Computrace," says Cross.

### LENOVO KEY FACTS

- A **Fortune Global 500** company
- One of the **Most Reputable Companies** according to Forbes
- Listed by Forbes as **10 Companies That Are Genuinely Green**
- On the **Honor Board** of the **Hang Seng Sustainability Index** with an A+ rating
- **Major research centers** in Japan, China and the US
- **Manufacturing and assembly** facilities in China, India, Mexico and the US
- No.1 in Worldwide Education Computing

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