

WINDSTREAM COMMUNICATIONS

Windstream Goes the Distance to Serve Customers in 23-State Area

Windstream Communications delivers telephone, high-speed Internet and high-definition digital TV throughout largely rural areas. To efficiently serve its dispersed customers, the company's installation and service fleet relies on a mobile deployment, with applications delivered over the Mobility XE[®] Mobile VPN from NetMotion Wireless.

About the Deployment

To dispatch service trucks efficiently and communicate work orders, Windstream uses a proprietary internal application, along with Outlook email and various Web applications. Within each truck, a Trimble iLM device handles Automatic Vehicle Location as well as access to cellular data networks. Fully covering the 23-state service area and rural terrain requires a mix of three cellular carriers. The Trimble device also provides a Wi-Fi access point for the technician's laptop, for connecting and accessing corporate resources over the cellular network. The truck effectively serves as a mobile hotspot.

To enhance its dispatch performance, Windstream partnered with NetMotion Wireless, which had been recommended by a peer telecommunications company. Once NetMotion Wireless Mobility XE was in place, all expectations were met. Most significantly, the connections survived the inevitable gaps in cellular coverage; technicians had hassle-free, continuous application access; and they remained logged into the home network at all times. This was especially important because Windstream uses RSA SecurID tokens for authentication. Mobility XE's ability to keep sessions alive through coverage gaps meant the technicians didn't have to re-enter their continuously changing PIN code throughout the workday.

Wi-Fi Connections for Higher Bandwidth

Windstream wanted to allow workers to use public Wi-Fi where available, to take advantage of the higher bandwidth for some types of tasks. Mobility XE made the transition seamless by preserving the connection as the laptops switched between the truck-mounted hotspots and public access points. Most importantly, the mobile VPN secures the connection, which eases any concerns about using a public hotspot for corporate communications.

In addition, the Mobility XE Policy Management module controls access to corporate resources. When a laptop connects via a third-party network (cellular carrier or public Wi-Fi), policies ratchet down the access and allow only specific applications related to field service. When in range of a corporate controlled Wi-Fi network at a Windstream office, relaxed policies allow broader access. Mobility XE delivers secure, always-on, always-reliable connections to Windstream technicians – so Windstream can keep their customers connected.



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ORGANIZATION

Windstream Communications

INDUSTRY

Telecommunications

OBJECTIVES

- Maintain seamless connection through coverage gaps
- Eliminate repeat authentications
- Secure corporate devices while allowing public Wi-Fi access

SOLUTION

- Mobility XE[®] Mobile VPN
- Panasonic Toughbooks and Dell laptops
- Trimble iLM access device
- Data networks from multiple carriers, augmented with Wi-Fi
- Mix of internally developed and off-the-shelf applications

RESULTS

- Created reliable coverage across multiple carrier networks, in rural areas throughout 23 states
- Enforced tight security based on connection type
- Introduced one-time sign-on capability with RSA SecurID