

Background

To operate its data center at peak efficiency, ARRIS turned to Avocent Data Center Planner to get immediate and accurate answers to questions needed for daily critical system management and future planning.

The software answered the data center manager's questions regarding equipment location, connections, power consumption, and current or future capacity. The tool enabled IT infrastructure optimization through unmatched visualization that helped the company plan with confidence.



ABOUT THE COMPANY

As a global communications technology company, ARRIS specializes in the design, engineering, and supply of broadband services for residential and business customers around the world.

It gives broadband operators the tools and platforms they need to deliver reliable telephony, demand-driven video, next-generation advertising, and high-speed data services. With its data center powering the delivery of those services, ARRIS relies on Avocent® Data Center Planner to take its data center operations to the next level.

“The data center is a long walk from my office. With all our rack information populated into the Data Center Planner software, I can quickly get any type of information that anybody asks for on our data center equipment. That can save me several hours a week.”

— RANDY HELLER, DATA CENTER MANAGER, ARRIS

Case Summary

Location: Suwanee, Georgia

Vertiv Solution:

- Avocent Data Center Planner
- Avocent KVM switches

Critical Need: With availability as a top priority for ARRIS and its customers, the company needed a way to facilitate data center management and get immediate and accurate answers to critical questions regarding data center equipment locations, requirements and capacities.

Results:

- Improved operating efficiency with ability to accurately and quickly respond to inquiries regarding data center equipment
- Simplified implementation due to vast library of more than 250,000 data center devices
- Enhanced data center planning with rapid provisioning of additional library resources, reducing wait time from weeks or days to a few hours or less
- Generated time savings by minimizing the need to physically access the data center
- Saved 60 percent in licensing fees annually

Solution

Easy Implementation

Having immediate access to accurate information motivated ARRIS to take advantage of Avocent® Data Center Planner. At least several times a week, the data center manager received requests from *different* management personnel regarding the capacity, voltage, or other requirements of various racks within the data center. In the past, providing answers to those questions would require the manager to spend 20 to 30 minutes walking down to the data center to physically gather needed information, followed by a visit to the manufacturer's website to check the equipment's exact specifications, which would then be used to calculate the answers.

The whole process might have taken anywhere from a few hours to a few days. With Avocent Data Center Planner, the manager now does a quick look up from any web browser and can typically get needed answers in less than a minute.

One aspect of the solution that ARRIS really appreciated is how easy it is to populate with data center configuration information. Not only does Data Center Planner allow the import of an organization's existing, recorded data center information, but it provides a comprehensive equipment library with the specifications of more than 250,000 distinct devices including size, weight, power usage, BTU output, a graphical view of dimensions, and much more.

The implementation process was so simple, that while still using a trial version of the software, ARRIS was able to configure more than 40 percent of its data center in two weeks.

"When we first tried out Data Center Planner, I actually forgot that we were using a trial version," Heller said. "It was so easy to put in all my devices that I just started setting up all my racks in it. You just type a couple letters of the manufacturer, product, or model number, and it pops up a whole list to choose from. Then it gives me a window where I just drag the device I want and place it anywhere in a server or rack. It takes a lot less time building a rack with Data Center Planner than the software we used to use."

Adding to that ease of use was the sheer number of devices provided in the Data Center Planner library, as well as the fast response by the Avocent product team to provide additional requested devices.

"When I'm working on a rack, I don't want to have to wait on a shape to get it finished," Heller said. "Data Center Planner includes more shapes in its library than other offerings, and even during the trial evaluation period whenever I asked for a few device shapes, I would get them within hours. With the software we used to use, it would take days or longer."

Significant Cost Savings

Standardization and savings in licensing costs also played significant roles in ARRIS' decision to take advantage of the Data Center Planner solution.

"Not only does Data Center Planner compete extremely well in terms of features with comparable products, but its licensing model was a huge selling point for us as well," Heller said. "Instead of a subscription license, Data Center Planner is a one-time purchase with annual maintenance fees, which results in a 60 percent per year savings for us. Plus, since we already have Avocent KVM switches, going with Data Center Planner plays well with our data center standardization efforts."

Data Center Planner's out-of-the-box integration with Avocent DSView™ management software created a single console for ARRIS to manage and control equipment in its data center.

For ARRIS, other key differentiators included a competitive feature set, the software's extensive library of data center equipment, and the responsiveness to ARRIS' requests. It also helped the company's efforts in limiting how many people needed physical access to the data center.

Data Center Planner, which is part of the Vertiv data center infrastructure management offering, also put ARRIS into a position to scale its data center more rapidly and flexibly create opportunities to offer its customers more services and options as the business grows.