FULL-SPEED AHEAD

Executive Software's *Diskeeper* helps keep computers running smoothly for Greenville County Emergency Medical Services.

Slow-running computers are not an option for Greenville County, S.C., Emergency Medical Services (EMS). The agency's five sites run 24 hours a day, seven days a week, as Greenville EMS treats acutely ill and severely injured residents in an expansive county of more than 375,000 people.

The Greenville County EMS 911 system includes computer applications such as geographic information systems (GIS) mapping and cutting-edge diagnosis software that instantly appears on computer screens when an emergency call comes through. In fact, a total of five different emergency service applications engage automatically when a Greenville emergency dispatcher picks up a call.

Diskeeper 8.0 automatic defragmentation software from Executive Software ensures these vital applications run as quickly as possible when a call for urgent response arrives. And, the solution saves both staff time and money through an automated defragmentation process that keeps county computers running at full speed all the time.

"We have five computers that used to take a day each to defragment manually," said Roger Dobbs, information technology coordinator for Greenville EMS. "That's a full week's worth of work that, because of Diskeeper, we no longer have to do at all."

Slow Motion

Greenville EMS' critical public-safety mission makes it simply unacceptable for hard drive fragmentation to hobble the agency's systems. "We can't have sluggish computers when lives are on the line," said Dobbs. "We knew our computers just couldn't be slow."

Disk fragmentation occurs when a file must be written to disk and there is no single space large enough to hold it. The computer subsequently breaks the file into pieces and scatters it throughout the disk, slowing computer processing speed and eventually choking even the fastest computers.

Greenville County's IT team combated the problem by running a manual defragmentation program every few months. But that meant each of the agency's five dispatch stations had to be shut down, one at a time, for defragmentation.

Manual defragmentation often took a full day to run its course on a single machine — so Dobbs and his staff could spend an entire work week completing the job. The process not only ate up valuable time from the busy IT staff, it also cost thousands of dollars.

As the hard drives grew more fragmented, effectiveness of the EMS system was reduced up to 20 percent between the manual defragmentation sessions. And the long downtime for

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defragmentation left fewer resources available to dispatchers receiving crucial calls. That was simply unacceptable. Because Greenville County's EMS system receives more than 40,000 critical calls each year, any reduction in the ability of emergency personnel to answer calls and dispatch immediate aid could mean the difference between life and death.

"Not long ago, we had the computers down again doing defragmentation, and I finally said, 'This is ridiculous,'" Dobbs said. "I knew there had to be something out there that could help."

Immediate Answer

Dobbs found the answer in Executive Software's Diskeeper 8.0, a defragmentation solution that keeps systems working at maximum speed without staff intervention.

"I thought it could work for us because it can be scheduled to run in the background. You can set your own schedule, and it seemed easy to install," Dobbs said.

"She asked what she should do, and I told her just to go ahead and reboot the computer," laughed Dobbs. "She did. Everything was fine. And that was that."

Diskeeper runs silently behind Greenville EMS critical applications, keeping them running as efficiently as possible. Before, system performance gradually degraded until county IT staff performed a manual defragmentation

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Dobbs contacted an Executive Software public-sector specialist who helped him purchase and download the software via the Internet. With little effort, Dobbs had downloaded and installed Diskeeper on Greenville's five mission-critical EMS computers that same day.

"We've been in business over 20 years," explained Kathy Wattman, vice president of public affairs for Executive Software. "We understand our government clientele. That's why our line of products is designed for a systems administrator to be able to set them up and just let them go."

According to Executive Software research, Diskeeper customers who implement the software across their networks consistently report an increase in system speed and a decrease in help desk calls. "The added computer speed can also help extend the life of workstations and servers by as much as two years," said Wattman, "a benefit that is particularly important in today's challenging economy."

Set It and Forget It

Diskeeper now runs transparently on all five of Greenville County's mission-critical EMS dispatcher stations, performing nightly defragmentation between 2 a.m. and 4 a.m.

"It works exactly the way I was told it would," said Dobbs. "You honestly just set it and forget it."

In fact, the system integrated so seamlessly with Greenville's EMS technology, Dobbs did not even inform dispatchers the software had been installed on their computers.

It wasn't until one operator received a Diskeeper message on her monitor that any of the dispatchers even learned the product had been added. The message instructed the user to reboot the computer so that a disk error detected by Diskeeper could be repaired. The dispatcher completed her task, and at next opportunity the problem was resolved.

each month. Now Diskeeper's daily run schedule ensures Greenville's EMS system always runs at peak efficiency.

The new defragmentation software provides other benefits too. "Diskeeper has saved us so many man-hours," said Dobbs. "And of course that means a monetary savings to us."

Solid Support

Dobbs said he was thoroughly satisfied with the support provided by Executive Software throughout the order, installation and maintenance process.

"Everyone I've dealt with [at Executive Software] has been extremely helpful," said Dobbs. "It's been very impressive. They even keep in touch just to make sure everything continues to go well."

And things are going well in Greenville these days.

"All of our EMS computers are up and running 24/7 now, and they're running quickly. Diskeeper has been a great tool for us," said Dobbs. "When it comes down to it, it's all about serving the community of Greenville as best as we possibly can. Diskeeper helps us do that."

Executive Software
Focused Development of System Management Tools

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