

Purpose:

To develop an efficient method of deploying 31 new client PCs obtained as part of a Radiation Oncology Information System (ROIS) upgrade. The major challenges were 1) reconciling the Windows domain environment required by the ROIS, with the Novell environment required for institutional (hospital-wide) applications, 2) getting all departmental, institutional, and extra-institutional client applications to work properly under normal user privileges, and 3) the short weekend timeframe of the upgrade.

Method and Materials:

The 31 Dell GX755 clients were preinstalled with a standard setup from the hospital IT department, including Windows XP, Novell Client, and hospital-wide applications. Deployment of the clients during the ROIS upgrade occurred in 2 groups. In Group 1, Windows domain membership and ROIS client applications were manually installed at each client. For Group 2, a single model client received the Group 1 installation, followed by exhaustive client testing. After fixing the various non-ROIS client applications that were discovered to be incompatible with the ROIS setup, the "perfected" model client was cloned via Microsoft Sysprep and Knoppix Linux to the other Group 2 clients.

Results:

Group 1 clients were deployed during the ROIS upgrade weekend; however, nonfunctional hospital applications were subsequently discovered, requiring individual patching. Group 2 clients were deployed one week after the upgrade weekend, but all client software worked properly from the start.

Conclusion:

The Group 2 method of "perfect then clone" is the preferable solution for mass deployments as it automates numerous tasks that would otherwise require repeating on every client. Post-upgrade, this method is undoubtedly superior as it provides an optimal method for restoring a disabled client. However, it requires that all troubleshooting occur "up front" before cloning, which, with proper planning, support, and expertise, should be possible to accomplish within the time-pressured ROIS upgrade weekend.

Conflict of Interest:

None.