EarthLink Increases Customer Satisfaction with Update Service

CASE STUDY

"The Update Service makes it easy for us to deliver software and data updates to all our users thereby increasing customer satisfaction and eliminating costly support calls. It also enables us to increase revenue by understanding our customer's needs better and by enhancing customer communication."

Steven Huey
Director of Software Products

About EarthLink

Celebrating ten years as a leading national Internet service provider (ISP), Atlanta-based EarthLink has earned an award-winning reputation for outstanding customer service and its suite of online products and services. According to the J.D. Power and Associates 2003 Internet Service Provider Residential Customer Satisfaction StudySM, EarthLink is ranked highest in customer satisfaction among high-speed Internet Service Providers. Serving over five million subscribers, EarthLink offers what every user should expect from their Internet experience: high-quality connectivity, minimal drop-offs and ISP-generated intrusions, and customizable features. Whether it's dial-up, high-speed, Web hosting, or wireless Internet service, EarthLink provides the tools that best let individuals use and enjoy the Internet on their own terms. Learn more about EarthLink at www.earthlink.net.

The Updating Challenge

EarthLink has over 5.3 million customers and issues about 3-4 updates per month. The updates include critical software updates to the core EarthLink TotalAccess 2004 software along with new optional utilities like EarthLink Parental Control, EarthLink Pop-Up Blocker and EarthLink Spyware Blocker. The distribution of the core software updates is critical to reducing support issues. The optional utilities help EarthLink differentiate themselves from other Internet Service Providers. EarthLink wants to notify all customers when these become available, but allow the customer to choose which utilities to install.

Additionally, EarthLink desired an updating solution capable of: distributing updates using bandwidth-friendly downloading techniques; staging an update to a subset of users before deploying to their entire user base; and gathering statistics on update adoption.

The Update Service Solution

Along with their TotalAccess2004 software, EarthLink distributes the EarthLink Update Manager. The Earthlink Update Manager is a self-hosted and re-branded version of the Update Service used to deploy EarthLink's utilities and updates. It actively checks for the critical software updates and optional utilities. If a critical update is found, the Update Manager will download and install the update for the customer using its bandwidth-throttling and background-downloading features. If an optional utility is found, the Update Manager will display information about the utility to the customer every 30 days and allow the customer to either install or ignore the utility. In addition to actively checking for these updates at each connection, the Update Manager can be run manually from the TotalAcess2004 menu option.

EarthLink decided on Update Service because it offers an un-intrusive and seamless user experience, the ability to update millions of end-points, as well as to download large files without taxing a user's bandwidth. Plus, Earthlink was impressed with the Update Service's very straightforward implementation, allowing development resources to focus on core-competencies. The great responsiveness of Update Service team to EarthLink's unique requirements was another deciding factor in favor of the solution from one of the most respected names in the software industry.

Update Service

Update Service is designed to make it easy for software vendors to deliver software and data updates to all their end users, thereby reducing user support calls and eliminating costly update shipping charges. It also enables ISVs to increase revenue by delivering HTML product announcements and promotions directly to their end users' desktops.

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