



A Cormant-CS DCIM Case Study:

Documenting Woodland Park Zoo's IT Infrastructure

Objective

Document all IT infrastructure and improve change management processes to maintain accurate records and increase the team's productivity and workflow.

Results

- Reduced time to make a change from about five hours to less than one hour.
- Replaced the inventory management system, yielding positive ROI from this alone.
- Increased record accuracy and mobility for remote planning and management.
- Enhanced network security.

Testimonial

"I can't even fathom how I would document our IT infrastructure otherwise. Having that documentation with the mobile handheld device to maintain it is key."

- Jay Wallace, Systems Administrator

Unique Cormant-CS Use

Documenting and managing all security cameras on the campus.

"Knowing what's plugged into the network is invaluable for security," said Jay Wallace, Systems Administrator.

Seattle, Washington's Woodland Park Zoo is an expansive 92-acre botanical setting housing more than 1,200 animals. As a 501(c)(3) entity focused on conservation leadership to save animals and habitats, the non-profit obtains its IT budget from zoo memberships, attendance, and donations. The zoo implemented the Cormant-CS data center infrastructure management (DCIM) solution in 2009 to document its IT infrastructure and to significantly reduce the time needed to manage change and to troubleshoot challenges.

Zoo IT Challenges

Multiple Record Sources

Most challenges derived from the lack of a single database to store current and historical records. The available documentation consisted of often out-of-date printed spreadsheets with handwritten notes stored in two large file folders. A fiber plant Visio drawing was stored separately. Employees often kept their own updated records, which was lost with staff turnover.

Cable Documentation

The zoo needed a way to properly document the 1,100 pairs of telecom copper cables, multiple manholes, and maintenance records, such as splice closures, campus drawings, and more. An easy documentation format was necessary for audits and updates.

Change Management and Troubleshooting

Changes and troubleshoots were often time consuming, manual processes that made network security difficult. They occur almost daily with new exhibits added annually. New exhibits require the knowledge of the nearest coaxial cables for CCTV, the fiber-optic drop locations for emergency phones, and additional data. Full network path information is required for every connection so records needed to be accurate.

Budget

As a non-profit, budget is only allocated to projects that can prove ROI, in this case through equipment management, staff time, and the removal of a separate inventory management system.

Why Cormant-CS?

- **Mobility:** With full offline mobility, records are updated in real-time to ensure accuracy while not reliant on Wi-Fi availability. Annual audits are also now feasible.
- **Configurability and Ease-of-Use:** Cormant-CS's intuitive interface with configurable fields and attributes allows employees to access, sort, and report information to make quick decisions. This configurability eradicated the need for the Zoo's separate inventory management system.
- **Value:** Exceptional functionality at a cost-effective price-point for a fast ROI made it an easy sell to the Board of Directors.
- **Auto-discovery:** Cormant-CS's auto-discovery allows security to see what is on the network at all times.

PROCESS TO TROUBLESHOOT FAULTY TELECOMMUNICATION CABLE

Without Cormant-CS (About 5 hours)

- ① Find documentation from as-builts or old cable records in multiple, disorganized binders.
- ② Walk to the building to physically verify the cable location.
- ③ Find and tone out the first cable.
- ④ Walk to the end of that cable, mark it, and report the findings on paper.
- ⑤ Repeat steps 3 and 4 for each additional hop.
- ⑥ Physically check each manhole to identify and verify the location of the nearest dark fiber.
- ⑦ Walk back to the desk to document the cables.

With Cormant-CS (Less than 1 hour)

- ① Perform a search by typing the name, cable type, or other feature into Cormant-CS, returning the result.
- ② Using the cable documentation, check the pathway, connectivity, and equipment with the mobile handheld device.



Project Success

The zoo populated Cormant-CS as changes occurred rather than importing their untrusted records. Equipment barcodes augment the usability of the offline-enabled mobile handheld devices. All building and exhibit drawings, IT cabinets with corresponding IT equipment, campus connectivity including security cameras, and manholes including their contents and locations are currently up-to-date and trusted in Cormant-CS. Woodland Park Zoo now also tracks deployed IOT-type equipment, including their networked sprinkler control panels spread across the 92-acre facility.

The zoo can now quickly locate equipment or connections and make necessary changes in as little as a fourth of the time. All data is stored in Cormant-CS, improving processes with mobility for up-to-date, valuable data. Auto-discovery identifies equipment on the network for improved campus security.

The zoo reached a positive ROI as quickly as the database was populated. Changes and troubleshooting require less time, leaving more time for proactively managing the infrastructure. Records are quickly accessible and data is no longer inaccurate or siloed. Fiber and port capacity is optimized to avoid unnecessary buildout or purchasing costs. Eliminating its inventory management system's recurring annual license fees covered the full cost of Cormant-CS DCIM in one year.

Woodland Park Zoo continues to expand upon its initial investment, finding savings from additional features.

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