

Industry:
Non-Profit
Research

Coast-to-Coast, End-to-End IT Support

MDRC Relies on ePlus® Technology for All of Its IT Needs



Created in 1974 by the Ford Foundation and a group of federal agencies, MDRC is best known for mounting large-scale evaluations of real-world policies and programs targeted to low-income people. It helped pioneer the use of random assignment—the same highly reliable methodology that is used to test new medicines—in the evaluation of such policies and programs.

With its headquarters in Manhattan and a remote office in California, MDRC has turned to ePlus Technology for sourcing, configuration, implementation, and professional services for well over a decade—helping it build a scalable, state-of-the-art IT infrastructure poised to meet its evolving needs.

A History of Success and Trust

MDRC has utilized the expertise of ePlus for almost every aspect of its IT infrastructure over the years. Selecting and using the right partner is critical to MDRC. With ePlus, MDRC has a partner with the required capabilities, certifications, manufacturer alliances, solution breadth and depth, and proven track record. And because of these factors, MDRC has entrusted its IT needs to ePlus time and time again—to get more accomplished with less and to make the organization more efficient.

“We have a solid relationship with ePlus based on mutual trust and strengthened by on-going, open communication,” explained Paul Feliu, IT Director at MDRC. “I can buy computer equipment from anyone. I can plug it in and get it to run. But I can’t get the same type of service and attention from another vendor or manufacturer. I know when I work with ePlus, the equipment I order will be properly integrated with my existing infrastructure—and if issues arise—they will be dealt with swiftly. They’re not afraid to escalate on our behalf and make us a priority.”

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Client Success Summary

Organization:
MDRC

Industry:
Non-Profit Research

Solution:
Entire IT Infrastructure
(HP BladeSystem,
VMware, NetApp
Storage, Cisco Unified
Communications,
Microsoft Exchange
2007, SharePoint,
and CRM)

ROI:
Substantial cost savings
(including electricity,
environmental controls,
and operating costs);
more efficient storage
utilization and adminis-
tration; collaboration,
communication, and
productivity
improvements

Multi-Vendor Approach

In addition to the strong relationship and superior rapport between MDRC and ePlus staff, a critical element to the mutual success is ePlus' long-standing vendor partnerships. ePlus holds top vendor designations as an HP Platinum Business Partner, Cisco Gold Certified Partner, VMware Premier Partner, NetApp Star Partner, and Microsoft Gold Certified Partner. Through this multi-vendor approach, ePlus has been able to help MDRC with just about every element of its IT infrastructure.

HP and VMware: Consolidation / Virtualization

ePlus assisted MDRC with the planning, sourcing, and implementation of HP BladeSystem c-Class Servers with VMware ESX. The virtualized environment has enabled the organization to allocate resources and equipment much quicker—providing tremendous benefits in ease of management. MDRC is in the process of consolidating 36 servers, and has already seen tangible results as it operates a “greener” and more efficient data center.

“We’ve seen substantial benefits from the server consolidation project, including 30% savings in electricity and 40% savings in environmental controls,” noted Feliu. “A consolidated environment will allow us to get into a smaller footprint and eventually move our data center outside of the New York area, where we will have lower overall operating costs and a lot less waste—allowing us to gain from further cost savings.”

NetApp: Storage

ePlus also helped MDRC with its storage infrastructure with the planning, design, and implementation of the NetApp FAS3000 series. The organization has benefited from a lower total cost of ownership through higher storage utilization and simpler administration.

“Our relationship with ePlus and NetApp has been stellar, and the support and service have been nothing but outstanding,” explained Feliu. “Our NetApp upgrade will allow us to take 60 terabytes of storage online to over 100-120 terabytes by end of year. The system is very simple to manage and use, allowing us to expand to meet our business needs without having to reinvent the wheel each time. It has been a cost-effective and reliable asset to our organization.”

Cisco: Unified Communications

When it came to communications, MDRC was one of the first non-profits to make the switch from traditional phone service to Cisco IP Telephony. The organization tapped ePlus' Cisco expertise to upgrade its Unity System and Call Managers to Unified Communications as well as handle its routers and core switching. With Cisco Master Specializations in both Unified Communications and Security, ePlus was able to help the organization set up a leading-edge Unified Communications system.

MDRC takes full advantage of the Cisco Unified Communications suite, including Cisco TelePresence Meeting (for live, face-to-face meetings over its network) and Cisco Unified MeetingPlace (for integrated voice, video, and web conferencing)—to replace a more costly outsourced web conferencing service.



“ePlus understands our organization and infrastructure, from a technical, human—even political—perspective. The commitment ePlus has demonstrated over the years cannot be replaced. We cannot get this type of service and support from a bid process. It is why we return to ePlus time after time to help us address our full range of IT needs.”

*– Paul Feliu
IT Director
MDRC*

“By integrating all of our phone services using our Cisco infrastructure, we are able to greatly improve communications, collaboration, and productivity,” noted Feliu. “We’re able to keep track of folks and stay in touch—regardless of location—especially with the use of Cisco wireless VoIP phones throughout our facility. And our home office users are seamlessly linked to MDRC, further enhancing our productivity gains.”

Microsoft: SharePoint, Exchange, CRM

When MDRC was searching for a solution to help with project management and document management control, it again turned to ePlus Technology’s Microsoft expertise to design and implement Microsoft SharePoint. The MDRC SharePoint portal acts as a cohesive document management and collaborative workspace as well as the organization’s Intranet.

“We produce a great deal of intellectual property, statistics, and reports. It’s what makes our organization run. We use a variety of standard publishing tools, and needed a way to ensure that staff worked off the most recent version. The SharePoint solution from ePlus helps us facilitate information sharing and collaboration across our organization,” explained Feliu.

Along with the SharePoint implementation, ePlus assisted MDRC with an upgrade to Microsoft Exchange 2007 as well as Microsoft CRM.

“We now have a single interface with a common look and feel to accomplish a variety of mission-critical tasks,” said Feliu. “From the universal calendar feature to a common document repository, project management system, and automated workflow—whether from their desk, an Internet café, or a home office—our staff are live and operational to get their jobs done quickly, securely, and efficiently through one standard interface.”

Security Too

As a government contractor, MDRC must comply with National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) guidelines. MDRC utilizes ePlus in a consultative role to assist the organization with security product assessments and recommendations for these data security initiatives.

And even though it’s a non-profit organization, MDRC faces the same expectations as most other companies—there are deadlines to meet and reports to complete. It needs reliable systems and applications in place to get the work done.

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For information on how ePlus can help your organization realize significant savings, contact us at 888-482-1122 or visit us on the Web at www.eplus.com/datacenter.

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