



The Miami County, Ohio, Municipal Courthouse satisfies the swamped agency's demand for speed with Gateway computers.

The Need for Speed

Agency: Miami County, Ohio, Municipal Courthouse

Mission: Efficiently administer justice for the citizens of Miami County

Technology Objective: To standardize the courthouse on low-cost, high-performance servers and PCs with flexible service

Gateway Solution: Gateway provided high-speed Profiles and servers, fostering a new high-performance culture at the courthouse.

ROI: Lines have been shorter, data entry has been quicker, and malfunctions are rare at the courthouse since switching to Gateway.

Known as an interstate community, Miami County, Ohio, lies along Interstate 75 and just north of the intersection at Interstate 70. This locale results in a large volume of traffic citations being processed by the Miami County Municipal Courthouse.

Years ago, data entry staff frequently worked six days a week to keep pace with the workload. But in 1995, Jim Vaughan, IT manager for the courthouse, replaced the agency's old Virtual Address Extension system with high-performance Gateway servers and the courthouse's outdated terminals with Gateway desktops.

The change propelled a new culture of high performance at the courthouse, accelerating data entry and minimizing technical repairs.

Now lines are shorter, citation processing is quicker and employees don't have to wait for computers to be fixed, according to Vaughan.

"I've got great support, and using Gateway products makes it even easier because everybody loves them," Vaughan said.

IT Profiling

The Gateway Profile has become the latest PC rock star at the courthouse. "All the users love the Profile — that small footprint," Vaughan said, adding that the increased speed of each new model dazzles users.

The Profiles stay at the courthouse for a five-year replacement cycle before traveling to other agencies. Vaughan said many staffers at other agencies were eager to get one of the "hand me down" Profiles.

"A lot of those Profiles are still burning and turning — doing great jobs," Vaughan said.

"No user should ever be down longer than it takes me to grab a spare system, run to their office and replace the one they're using."

— Jim Vaughan, IT manager, Miami County, Ohio,
Municipal County Courthouse

Triple Threat

Vaughan said Gateway offered him a triple threat of high performance, affordability and the best service he's ever had working at the courthouse.

He said Gateway phone technical support technicians masterfully assist both inexperienced technicians and IT veterans. He said Gateway representatives treat him like an experienced IT professional, allowing him to skip needless troubleshooting before shipping the part.

Gateway can be extremely helpful to less experienced IT staff as well, he said. For example, Vaughan was out sick for a short period soon after the Gateway implementation, leaving his newly hired, untrained assistant to handle most technical repairs. When his assistant ran into trouble, Gateway stepped up to the plate.

"Gateway's technical support system walked her completely through diagnosing the issue, determining the problem and sent her the component that needed to be replaced," Vaughan said.

The part arrived the next day, he said, and Gateway walked her through the installation.

"She told me when it was all done, 'Jim, that was the easiest job I've ever done.'"

Always Up and Running

PC users don't wait for their computers to be fixed with Vaughan holding the IT reins. He maintains one spare unit of each model to give a user when his or her system fails.

"No user should ever be down longer than it takes me to grab a spare system, run to their office and replace the one they're using," he said.

He said he established that policy soon after beginning work at the courthouse in 1993. His local PC vendors usually sent a technician to fix problems on site, occupying a user's computer for too long, said Vaughan.

"I didn't need a technician sitting in the judge's office trying to troubleshoot a PC while the judge was trying to conduct business," he said.

Vaughan only troubleshoots a computer after he's whisked it away from the user's desk. Gateway's part replacement service delivers him the necessary parts the next day, and then that repaired system becomes the new spare unit. However, malfunctions rarely happen, Vaughan said.

"The frequency that malfunctions happen is so rare," he said. "When it does happen I almost think, 'This is a fun day. I've got to do something different.'"

Vaughan also uses eight Gateway servers in the courthouse. He said his new Gateway server is enormous and proving extremely durable.

"The latest server we got from Gateway is just a hog. It's a monster. It's so fast. It just blows your socks away. We've got power to spare," Vaughan said. "Nothing ever goes wrong. They're up almost all the time."

A Partnership That Works

Vaughan said his sales representative stays current on the courthouse's needs and that he views him as a colleague and friend.

"He's my go-to guy. If I have an issue about anything, and I can't get it resolved — which is very rare — I'll go to him," Vaughan said. "When you've got that kind of an inside ace for you, it makes doing what I do so much easier."

Vaughan said increased speed was the monumental change Gateway brought the courthouse. He said the agency finishes proceedings earlier, and lines are shorter.

One data entry employee — known for her speed typing — always stayed within the "type-ahead buffer," typing ahead of her machine while filling out the program template. That changed when Vaughan deployed the new Gateway Profile.

"It's so fast. She doesn't get in the type-ahead buffer anymore," he said.

Vaughan said much of the credit for improvements at the courthouse belongs to agency staff and an IT-minded judge. Gateway equipment, however, is the technology foundation that enables staff to be their best.

"Where the fingers meet the road is a Gateway product," he said. "Where the data is nestled is a Gateway product, and the reliability around here has been outstanding," Vaughan said. "Every time we get a new model in, it's just amazing. Gateway is staying right with the technology all the way."



The Gateway Profile® provides courthouse staff with the performance and reliability they need to keep up with demand.