

# Case Study: Privatizing IT Improves Salem's Security and Performance While Reducing Costs



## Town Salem, NH

**Challenge** Town IT systems were at risk from security threats, lack of planning resources, aging infrastructure, and limited IT budget.

**Solution** Neoscope Technology Solutions' Proactive Managed IT Services

**Results** Several urgent issues corrected in first 12 months, town staff better supported, and over \$200,000 annual cost savings realized.

*"We are saving over \$200,000 per year, mitigated major security risks, have a better onsite and offsite backup of critical information, and much more. They did a fantastic job, and are extremely competent and capable of providing a level of service we need in this community.. I would definitely do it again."*

**—Keith Hickey, Town Manager, Salem, NH**



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Town Manager,  
Salem, NH

Staff and town leaders also expressed frustration about a "culture of no" and "not possible" from existing IT support.

Hickey knew there was a better way to manage and support the town's IT. He initiated a comprehensive review of the town's IT approach, recommending first an outside study, and then full outsourcing of all IT needs. With his recommendation, the Board of Selectmen chose Neoscope.

Since January 2012, Neoscope has served as Salem's full-service outsourced IT solution, delivering improved performance, reduced risk, and an annual budget cost savings of over \$200,000.

## KEY CHALLENGES

When Keith Hickey started his job as Town Manager in March 2011, he heard volumes about Salem's troubled IT infrastructure and support. Specific concerns from town staff, leaders, volunteers, and residents included:

- Mission-critical systems were performing poorly and at risk of failure
- Insufficient Internet bandwidth-resulting in reduced productivity and ineffective backups of crucial information
- A culture of "No" and "Not Possible"- existing IT staff were unwilling to embrace new technologies, improve response times, or bring a "can do" attitude to work
- Poor IT budget oversight and planning- without proactive planning and assessment, Salem faced higher infrastructure replacement costs, poor expense control, and limited visibility on mounting investment needs
- No disaster recovery planning- leaving critical services and data at significant risk of loss
- Vulnerable network- with no clear security strategy, Salem was at higher risk for intrusion, viruses, and resource-stealing malware attacks. Personally identifiable information was left unprotected, creating potential compliance and liability issues
- Budget pressures- with town leadership expecting to keep Salem's municipal tax rate among the lowest in the state and with so many other areas of need, Salem's IT spending was deeply constrained

## OVERVIEW

When new Town Manager Keith Hickey first came to Salem, NH in 2011, he heard widespread dismay and concern about the state of the town's IT systems. Town staff complained about slow internet speeds, lack of training and support on basic programs, and an aging infrastructure prone to problems and security holes.

## SEEKING A SOLUTION

With all these challenges and the potential negative effects of an underperforming and insecure IT system, Hickey and the town leadership decided to rethink the town's entire approach to IT, and entertained the possibility of outsourcing some or all of the functions to a competent vendor. Any provider would need to solve Salem's most pressing problems, provide a short and long-term technology strategy, and to deliver the solution while saving money versus the town's existing IT staff. After conducting numerous interviews with several different IT Solution Providers, Salem chose Neoscope.

## SEAMLESS TRANSITION

Salem engaged Neoscope for an IT assessment in mid-2011. By early October, Neoscope presented a proposal and transition plan for outsourced services beginning in early 2012.

To facilitate this quick transition process, Neoscope's President Tim Martin, Chief Technology Officer Bruce Farmer, and several Neoscope network engineers and network administrators were on site to assess and discuss a long-term technology plan.

During the assessment process Neoscope uncovered several additional problems. "We identified computer network security risks and environmental hazards in the server room," said Tim Martin. "Salem's network had clear security issues, the network cabling was sub-standard, and the town's servers were located in an area of the building that posed a serious flood hazard that could have destroyed critical systems and data."

With clear priorities set and a cost-saving contract in place, Neoscope moved urgently to improve Salem's IT infrastructure in January 2012.

## IMMEDIATE RESULTS

Within a few months, many of the most pressing issues were addressed. Security controls were immediately implemented, and the most dangerous or risky infrastructure issues were fixed. Neoscope's proactive IT approach started catching and solving problems before they could spread.

As 2012 progressed, Neoscope continued to work with all town departments to deliver improvements and benefits, including:

- Streamlined and centralized server and desktop preventative maintenance, antivirus solution, Microsoft Updates, remote access, ticketing, and asset management system
- Implemented a first-ever disaster recovery plan for critical systems and data
- Rolled out a hybrid cloud/local backup infrastructure, enabling shared resources, enhanced file-sharing, and increased employee collaboration
- Assisted with implementation of VoIP telecom solution that reduced telecommunications costs and improved inner-office communications
- Streamlined Police and Fire department's processes resulting in increased productivity and diminished costs
- Instituted network security upgrades
- Led creation of a 5-year technology plan to respond to expected and unexpected changes in technology and forecast resource demands

In addition to immediate "bottom line" savings to the taxpayer, Salem is also realizing increases in productivity and staff morale, while Neoscope's proactive IT approach solves problems without consuming valuable energy and time from Hickey and his town staff.

Salem's decision to embrace the growing trend toward partnerships with outsourced vendors has resulted in the citizens and employees receiving better IT services and support at significantly lower costs.

## ABOUT NEOSCOPE TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

Neoscope Technology Solutions is a multi-disciplinary Information Technology consulting, services and products firm. Neoscope's staff consists of certified senior IT professionals who understand IT as a vital component of core business functions. Using a consultative approach Neoscope evaluates a client's specific business requirements and then advises the client on the best practices technology solutions to accomplish their business objectives. Neoscope's distinctive proactive managed IT services utilizes advanced tools and processes to keep all essential IT systems up and running to maximize employee productivity, increase customer service and reduce costs; **all at a predictable affordable monthly fee.**