



sonicadmin Customer Success Story: Hennigan, Bennett & Dorman LLP (HBD)

Respected Law Firm 'Picks' BlackBerry and sonicadmin Solution to Maximize Productivity

**Jim Bergman, Director of Information Technology
Hennigan, Bennett & Dorman LLP (HBD)**

The Challenge

In the legal profession it is no great secret that information at your fingertips can make or break a case. Today's successful law firms are increasingly dependent on IT systems for research, the creation of legal briefs, and to keep track of the smallest details for their clients. However, this dependency means that systems problems can result in lost productivity of key billable staff and the quality of service that can be provided to a firm's clients. In today's highly competitive legal industry this can mean unrecoverable lost revenue and worse, lost clients.

Hennigan, Bennett & Dorman LLP (HBD) is a mid-sized Los Angeles-based law firm that specializes in complex business litigation, corporate reorganization and intellectual property matters. HBD employs more than 100 professionals and support staff.

The firm made a decision several years ago to continually invest in technology as it evolved in order to be competitive with firms of all sizes. HBD lawyers, legal and financial professionals are able to make efficient use of millions of pages of digital documents, archived and newly created data files by using the latest available technology. The IT staff strives to ensure that the system is up and running on a 24x7 basis to be able to provide HBD professionals with the information they need at their fingertips at anytime. Ensuring that mission critical processes are always up and running, means that an IT staff member is always on call; therefore, they must always be able to have access to the network. To provide this level of support, at least one member of the staff must either in be in the office or be tethered to a PC or laptop to dial-in and fix any issues with the system on a moment's notice.

In addition to ensuring that critical processes are running 24x7, the team must also support a large number of PCs and users. Most professionals with the firm have a desktop PC at the office, a laptop, and a PC at home, all of which are company owned and are part of the network. End-user issues arise from time to time at all hours of the day and night. For example, every user on the network has a user account and password. With so many PCs on the network and the nature of the business, security is of high concern; therefore, passwords are changed frequently to help protect the firm's sensitive data. Frequently a user forgets a new password or it may have expired, often prompting an urgent plea to the IT person on call.

The Situation

"The IT infrastructure that supports HBD and helps keep it competitive consists of more than fifteen servers, 200 PCs, 55 BlackBerry devices and is administered by three full-time system administrators," said Jim Bergman, director of information technology with HBD.

Providing support for such a network is not without its challenges, especially given the fact that it must be up and running around the clock. Bergman found that his IT staff was constantly facing two issues that frequently required after hours attention.

Each server stores critical information or runs critical processes that the firm depends on. The well planned system usually runs without fault but computers are, after all computers, and there are times when the servers become locked up with a run-away process or just simply need to be rebooted. Also, although HBD's password procedures provide effective security, one downside is that a qualified user is sometimes inadvertently locked out because they have forgotten their new password or their password has been changed.

"Supporting our network and users on a 24x7 basis means getting calls after hours, on weekends, and holidays," added Bergman. "When one of us would get a call or message regarding an issue at the office, first we'd have to figure out how to get to the office or connect to the network. Frequently we have been called away from our families on weekends to get to a terminal where we can dial in to rectify the situation – all this while a lawyer sits idle, desperately needing information or access to the network. In our business where lawyers bill by the hour, lost time quickly translates to lost revenue."

The Solution

After receiving literally one too many "wake up" calls, Bergman began to look for a solution that would help alleviate some of the issues of supporting HBD users on a 24x7 basis. After reading a story on Sonic Mobility's sonicadmin™ solution for BlackBerry devices in the media, Bergman decided to give it a try.

"I downloaded the latest version of sonicadmin from Sonic Mobility's web site and had it up and running with my BlackBerry in a little under an hour," said Bergman. "I quickly realized that the utility did exactly what it claimed it could do by giving me instant wireless access to the servers running our network."

Bergman soon licensed 12 HBD servers with the sonicadmin solution and loaded the software on all of the system administrators' BlackBerry Wireless Handhelds, which are 6510 models running on the Nextel network.

In the days following the initial trial of the software, Bergman had a chance to test the solution in real life. "The following weekend, one of our users sent a message from his BlackBerry notifying me that he could not logon to the network. I was quickly able to use my BlackBerry and sonicadmin to logon to the server and change his password, all without leaving my kitchen table."

Another feature the staff uses is the ability to reboot servers. If a user notifies the support staff that a server or process on a server is unavailable, the system administrator on call can use his BlackBerry with sonicadmin from anywhere to reboot a specific server, fixing about 90 percent of system problems, Bergman estimates.

The Benefits

Now the IT staff no longer has to drop what they are doing and find a way to logon to the network to rectify a server or user issue. Using the new solution, they can now make system modifications, including password changes, rebooting of servers and have the ability to perform many other server administration tasks wherever they are.

This has decreased the HBD system's downtime, which has in turn increased lawyer productivity. Many of their lawyers bill at competitive industry rates ranging from \$200-615 per hour. For every hour of productivity lost, a corresponding amount is lost in revenue. Bergman figures that sonicadmin paid for itself in the first month it was installed through improved lawyer productivity alone.

Bergman also says it has decreased the man-hours that it takes to provide 24x7 support to HBD's users. He added that they would need to hire an additional IT staff member to provide the expediency in support that their users have now come to expect from them using the BlackBerry and sonicadmin solution.

"Sonic Mobility has provided us with a true "must have" tool for our network. Since we were already sold on the "always on" benefits of the BlackBerry, it was only logical to also put that same technology to work by giving us 24x7 access to administer our servers and network," concluded Bergman.

Software: W2K Server
Microsoft Exchange/Outlook
BlackBerry Enterprise Server
Sonic Mobility's **sonicadmin**
Other software specific to the legal profession

Hardware: Exchange Server – Dell PowerEdge 4400 w/ Dual Xeon 1.7 GHz processors
BlackBerry Enterprise Server – Dell PowerEdge 2450 w/ Xeon 1.7 GHz processor
sonicadmin Server – Dell PowerEdge 1550 w/ PIII 1.2 GHz processor

The **sonicadmin** feature set

sonicadmin utilizes embedded client software; not WAP or browser based¹, for maximum security and performance using today's relatively slow wireless networks. **sonicadmin** allows the management of virtually all types of network servers and devices. Windows servers are managed utilizing an intuitive and familiar menu driven interface while non-Windows servers and devices such as Linux, UNIX, routers, hubs, printers, switches, etc. and even databases can be managed using the interactive SSH / Telnet command line interface. **sonicadmin**, using the **powerrover** component, also allows you to manage power to any network device in the all too common event that you cannot connect to it by normal means and it requires a 'reboot.'

About Sonic Mobility

Sonic Mobility develops and sells innovative wireless and voice interface solutions that empower system administrators, network security personnel, database administrators, and other technical resources to be effectively mobile.

sonicadmin embedded client software is available for the most common mobile platforms including:

- ✓ Pocket PC 2002/2000/Phone Edition
- ✓ BlackBerry Wireless Handheld™
- ✓ Windows PCs – 2000, NT, XP - designed for laptops

Contact us

If you require technical support for **sonicadmin**, please email us: support@sonicmobility.com

If you're interested in **sonicadmin**, please email us: sales@sonicmobility.com

If you are a reseller, distributor or network system integrator and interested in becoming a business partner, please email us: partners@sonicmobility.com

Visit us on the Web: <http://www.sonicmobility.com>

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¹ The fact that **sonicadmin** does not use WAP, or run in a browser, is significant for data security reasons. For more information visit <http://www.sonicmobility.com>