

COMPANY PROFILE

Durbin and Associates is a family law practice in Oakville Ontario. It's founder, Stephen Durbin, was called to the bar in 1984 and is a former instructor in the Bar Admission Course in trial tactics, negotiation and ethics. Durbin and Associates is the top rated family lawyer in the province as of July 4, 2014.

The logo for Durbin and Associates, with the company name in a bold, serif font inside a gold-bordered box.

BUSINESS SITUATION

As a growing law firm, the practice has expanded rapidly, both with the number of employees and office space; resulting in the addition of a second downtown Oakville office as well as offices in Mississauga and Toronto. The additional staff and multiple offices presented unique challenges for the firm in the areas of logistics, resource management, and technology.

TECHNICAL SITUATION

The firm uses Apple computers. However, the firm relies upon Windows-based practice management software and Windows-based document generation software. These applications are critical to the daily operation of the firm and account for the bulk of the computer work performed by staff.

In order to use the software, every Apple computer had Windows installed in a Parallels (virtual machine) environment. A complex peer-to-peer file sharing arrangement was in place involving all computers and Window instances. Backup of the main data repository was performed using Apple's Time Machine.

The system had suffered from multiple crashes, resulting in lost data, lost productivity, and lost confidence. Activity reports were being printed every night to ensure that a reliable record of information was available.

SOLUTION

Birmingham Consulting implemented a platform-independent system that allows staff to use the Windows-based applications regardless of the type of computer they are using; without the need for Parallels; and with a greatly simplified networking environment.

Two Windows servers were implemented to accomplish this arrangement. Parallels was removed from all Apple computers and remote desktop applications for Apple were installed in it's place.

Business-class wireless firewalls were installed in both locations and a permanent site-to-site connection established between the offices, as well as remote access for staff when working offsite. Staff members always access the system the same way, whether they are in an office or working remotely.

The system is monitored 24x7 and automatically provides alerts of any impending issues. Automated offsite backup protects against any potential data loss in the event of fire, theft, or system failure.

RESULTS

Since the system was introduced, both productivity and efficiency have both improved and activity reports are no longer printed every day.

During a recent hardware failure, the monitoring system immediately issued a notification of the problem and the new backup arrangement ensured that no data was lost.

"Thanks to Birmingham Consulting, productivity has improved significantly. We are able to grow the business without worrying about the stability of our computer systems."

- Stephen Durbin, Durbin and Associates
