



Our Customers Speak for Our Solutions

An OAISYS Case Study



Burlington, VT

Headquartered in Burlington, VT, Vermont Rail System (VRS) is a regional rail service operator with more than 300 miles of track stretching across Vermont and Upstate New York. The service handles commodities shipping for various customers in its region.

Vermont Rail System averages one train a day in each direction on each of its rail lines, with the dispatch center in Rutland, VT. The dispatch center handles calls by phone and dispatches trains and crews via radio to and from its freight yards.

Calls the company handles fall into three main categories. First are calls between the dispatch center and train crews to receive authorizations for movement and instructions for the day. Second are calls from the general public concerning safety and operational related issues, such as signals flashing at a grade crossing. Third are calls from VRS management inquiring about train location, remaining crew hours, and arrival and departure times from terminals. In order to comply with Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) requirements and to evaluate dispatcher and employee performance, VRS looked for a state of

the art recording solution that would allow them to store, play back, and review both their telephone and radio-based communications.

"This is a 24-hour operation," said Selden Houghton, VRS IT/Special Projects Manager. "As part of that we need to have everything recorded. It's pretty much a requirement from the FRA, but it's also in case we have a need to, number one, evaluate how we're doing and, number two, handle any kinds of incidents we might have."

After bringing dispatch duties back in house from its previously outsourced provider, VRS needed a recording solution that was easy to manage, could handle both telephone and radio calls, was easily searchable, and provided adequate storage.

"Previously, we'd used a really basic PC with some off the shelf software," Houghton said. "It saved calls as .WAV files. It was very unorganized, haphazard and unreliable. It worked, but it was cumbersome because we had to tie in our phone system and two different radio channels into a single, basic, analog interface. There was no database attached to it and no data compression. It was extremely inefficient



and extremely unreliable.”

When VRS took their need for a business-class recording solution to their telephone system reseller, OAISYS Channel Partner Northeast Information Systems, Tracer was the obvious candidate.

“We recommended they go with Tracer because it was the best solution for the customer’s needs,” said Northeast President C.G. Frink. “The flexibility of being able to cover the phone lines and the radio channels was paramount, and OAISYS was the obvious choice. We were confident that the interface and the software would work well with their various audio sources.”

Installation was quick and seamless, and Houghton is happy with the results. “Northeast set it all up. When I got it onsite it was very easy to get installed in our rack, setup the network interface to it, and set up multiple users to be able to search recordings, e-mail recordings, and perform administrative functions.”

One of the primary benefits Houghton has realized is the ability to easily share call recordings. “I like being able to share a link or e-mail calls,” he said. “We have multiple operations managers, plus our general manager, and they all exchange data and talk about issues that come up. Being able to go in and shoot recordings out in an e-mail is very beneficial and efficient.”

Already Tracer has had an impact on the professionalism of the company’s communications with its crews. “It helps to eliminate any unprofessionalism you might see. Previously we only used recordings in very serious situations

because they were so hard to locate and manage. Now we can just pull it up on a laptop and say, ‘Here’s what’s going on.’ That’s one of the big things we’ve seen right off.”

The ability to record radio calls on the local switching channel in the Rutland yard was one of the key differentiators that made Tracer the ideal fit. “We’ve never, ever been able to record that yard channel reliably before because no system could handle the amount of data that came out of it and



the amount of space that it required. But Tracer is handling it really well, even though it’s almost non-stop recordings. It’s very important because if we have something happen in our switching yard, that’s when we’d go back to it. In the past, we had many times where we wanted the local channel recordings and they were not available.

“Now, I know that if we have something come up, we can easily and reliably retrieve the call we want. That was definitely a big bonus that nobody expected to have.”



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