The mission of the National Guard is to serve both the community and the country. They stand ready to respond to domestic emergencies and natural disasters, overseas combat missions, counterdrug efforts, reconstruction missions and more. The Wisconsin Army National Guard (WIARNG) is made up of approximately 7,700 soldiers including a headquarters staff and four major commands located throughout 67 Wisconsin communities.

The Challenge
The WIARNG had numerous storage systems, resulting in a fractured architecture. Critical applications were not protected during backup, and there were many file servers and disparate application server/storage silos to maintain. These problems were the result of an ever-growing mission and the need for more disk storage each growth requirements. The result was an amalgamation of many generic products that couldn’t scale efficiently, were costly to maintain, and required divergent knowledge sets. Essentially, their infrastructure had scaled out of control and IT had become too labor-intensive and complex for the staff to handle. They need a unified, optimized, scalable and automated architecture.

Getting Started
Swish began by identifying the WIARNG’s most pressing concerns. Swish begins every engagement with a conversation to truly understand the business objectives and constraints. This involves live white-boarding and analysis sessions to help visualize the end-to-end architecture, challenges, and mission objectives.

The WIARNG IT staff were smart and highly motivated experts, but they struggled with the available resources, fighting a battle against a data infrastructure which was out of control. The organization needed unified storage architecture and processes, including consolidation into one enterprise data fabric.
"We came to a game plan together and then achieved our goal as we had envisioned." Steven Smith, Chief Warrant Officer, WIARNG

The Solution

Swish provided the WIARNG with statewide IT resources needed for command and control, including a continuity of operations (COOP) plan for their backup site housed at a different location from its headquarters should the organization encounter a site-level IT issue or need disaster recovery.

During the deployment, Swish’s specialists helped the WIARNG become experts in adopting and operating the new solution. The organization’s management challenges dwindled. Swish credits the success of this project, and others like it, to their ability to truly become a member of the customer’s team.

“Some companies need to bring in partners to implement solutions but Swish’s engineers are experts in all of the technologies they sell, and they can build on, and integrate with, existing infrastructures from other manufacturers as well,” stated Steven Smith, Chief Warrant Officer. There are no “handoffs,” and Swish maintains a single point of contact throughout the project.

The WIARNG also realized significant cost savings because the new architecture is reliable and manageable, requiring less maintenance. They leverage one set of management procedures in which they all become proficient. If future funding cuts occur, the organization’s IT infrastructure can be easily maintained without additional manpower.

Summary

The WIARNG engaged Swish in September. Swish had equipment on-site by October and began work before the holidays. By spring, the WIARNG was fully standalone and optimized and their IT systems were uniform and automated. Swish maintains an ongoing relationship with the WIARNG and continues to support its mission.

About Swish

Swish is a customer-centric, specialized integrator with an engineering first culture. Swish focuses on IT Modernization, Performance and Cybersecurity solutions. Swish strives to bring value to clients through continuous improvement expertise; robust services, superior engineering and creative solutions.

To learn more, please visit: [www.swishdata.com](http://www.swishdata.com)

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