Case Study

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Remote Management Technology Helps a Large Telecom Navigate a Major Operational Shift

Claro Argentina leverages the Intel vPro® Platform for secure and reliable remote device management

Claro

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Executive Summary

Claro Argentina is a leading telecommunications company with operations throughout Latin America. When nearly all of Claro's 8,000 employees shifted to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic, the IT team needed a tool for remote management of thousands of devices that could be rolled out rapidly and at a large scale. Working with partner **QS Technologies**, Claro found a reliable solution that's more secure in Intel® Endpoint Management Assistant (Intel® EMA) and Intel® Active Management Technology (Intel® AMT).

Introduction

Claro Argentina, a subsidiary of América Móvil, has the largest market share of mobile, fixed-line, and broadband services in the country. Headquartered in Buenos Aires, Claro serves millions of customers in more than 550 cities.

Claro's Microinformatics (IT) team provides IT services for the company's 8,000 employees located throughout the country. Despite the team's technical expertise and responsiveness, unanticipated changes in such a large user base have the potential for an outsized negative impact on operations. The right technology, combined with the right partnerships, can make all the difference.

Challenge: Solving a Workforce-Wide Crisis

At the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, few of Claro's 8,000 workers were remote. Although Claro had begun purchasing Dell devices built with the Intel vPro® Platform before the start of the pandemic, Claro's Microinformatics team was using different tools—ones that had already been in place before shifting to Intel vPro—to manage the small number of devices in these rare remote work cases. The team had yet to take advantage of the remote management capabilities available through Intel vPro.

The impact of the pandemic drastically changed that approach. "The pandemic put the entire company practically off the grid," Microinformatics Supervisor Mariana Botejara explains. Remote work became the standard for nearly all Claro employees, but for various reasons, many of the users could not use the VPN to access the Claro network and receive necessary IT assistance. "The challenge began there," says Botejara.

Solution: Intel AMT and Intel EMA for Remote Management

QS Technologies, an Intel Gold Partner headquartered in Buenos Aires, provides networking, security, virtualization, management, and consulting services in Latin America, including to Claro Argentina. Recognizing the need to implement a large-scale remote management solution quickly, Botejara asked QS Technologies for help. QS Technologies had originally recommended Dell devices with Intel vPro to Claro, so these devices already comprised 75% of Claro's remote workers' PCs. This left Claro well positioned to take advantage of Intel AMT and Intel EMA to address its remote management challenge.

Sebastián Rebollar, CEO & Founder of QS Technologies, says, "In our work as a partner, positioning and encouraging Intel vPro as an option was the key for the client, as was convincing Dell, the infrastructure supplier, that the solution for Claro was Intel vPro—given the specific requirements for dispersion, large volumes of users, and primary needs for remote equipment access."

However, the size and complexity of Claro's operations introduced some obstacles to the implementation process. Rebollar explains that the primary difficulties were due to "a lot of politics around the integration of various sectors." Fortunately, QS Technologies was able to leverage its expertise both as a solutions provider and a collaborative partner to overcome objections. "We worked with different areas within Claro, integrated very well with Dell…and worked patiently and with explanations in front of the client to obtain sufficient confidence in order to come to a good resolution," says Rebollar.

At Claro, Microinformatics Analyst Luciano Sillem worked with Botejara to roll out the Intel vPro technology. He found that the ease of implementation was a notable advantage of using Intel AMT and Intel EMA. "We already had other remote management tools before EMA implementation, but this one made a difference. The others all required authentication with the Active Directory domain, and once the equipment loses trust or a similar error happens, it prevents us from accessing the device. Intel EMA has this advantage. In other words, with Intel EMA, we were able to take control—even when the machine has lost trust with the domain—and solve the problem," says Sillem.

Additionally, some of Claro's devices were what the team calls "unattended," meaning equipment housed in a remote location might be connected to a screen, but with no possibility of connecting a keyboard or mouse in person to apply changes. However, as Sillem says, "With EMA, I was able to obtain control from outside of the operating system and make a necessary change in the equipment BIOS, which with another platform is not possible."

Results: Intel vPro Delivers a "Clear Value-Add"

Due to the unique conditions created by the pandemic, Botejara explains that it is impossible for Claro to determine a true reduction in ticket response time, as pre-pandemic metrics are not comparable. However, since the move to Intel AMT and Intel EMA, Claro has seen a marked improvement in user satisfaction. "No matter where the user is, we will be able to assist them"; without a doubt, Botejara says, "It was a clear value-add."

Based on the project's success, the Claro team continues to grow its fleet of Intel vPro devices. Today, 90% of the devices used by remote workers depend on Intel vPro, and more than half of Claro's 7,700 devices run on the platform.

Botejara emphasizes the ease of implementation of the Intel vPro Platform: "From when we started with the introduction meetings, to the kickoff, and ultimately when we had the usable platform, it took—more or less—three months."

She also credits the strong partnerships with QS Technologies, Dell, and Intel for the assistance the team received when encountering obstacles. In one example, she explains, "The Admin Control Mode as a provisioning method needs a certificate, but due to limitations of our infrastructure, it could not be done. It ended up being discarded temporarily, but over weekly meetings, the experts from QS Technologies and Dell showed us what we had to do."

With help from partners, Claro was able to address its remote work issues successfully and move past the pandemic. Overall, says Botejara of Intel AMT and Intel EMA, "It's simple. It's intuitive. It's not complex to implement."

Learn more about Intel vPro as well as Intel AMT and Intel EMA.

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