

HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT:

KOMODO EYE SPOTS WIRELESS NETWORK ISSUES

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IT service provider Executech appreciates all its customers, but one client has proven especially valuable. That client is the private equity firm that inadvertently introduced Executech to a Wi-Fi network monitoring tool that can simulate the end user experience.

When Komodo Systems showed up at the private equity firm to pitch its product, the startup never imagined how successful it would be. The Komodo executives sat down with the potential investors, and during the product demonstration one of them walked outside the room. That's when Executech's James Fair, who was onsite for a service call, heard the Komodo executives talking. He was immediately interested, and asked if he could listen in.

"That started the relationship," said Fair, Executech's vice president of technology services. "We have used them at many clients where we have had wireless issues."



Executech provides outsourced IT services for companies that range in size from 5 to 1500 employees. Fair said there are two primary use cases for the Komodo Eye: companies that use wireless as a primary network connection and companies that are experiencing problems with their wireless networks.

"A lot of clients of ours don't have any wired connections," he said, adding that wireless is "almost the de facto standard now."

Fair said wireless network problems are the reason many clients call Executech in the first place. The Komodo Eye has helped Executech answer more of those calls with confidence.

"It's not a standard deployment yet [but] we've discussed that as an option," said Fair. When Executech deploys

the Komodo Eye devices, the client pays an additional monthly subscription fee based on the number of devices deployed.

The Komodo Eye is different from traditional network monitoring software, which reports on network performance from the company's Internet connection to the access point. The Komodo Eye reports on the most critical connection: that between the access point and the end user.

The Komodo Eye simulates an end user device by finding an access point and a signal and then connecting and trying to download a file from a website. A notification is generated if the expected level of performance is not met.

"It's easy for people to throw access points out there, but what they don't know is what to do when those don't work or when they have faulty services or when they have less than stellar results from their wireless. So in a lot of cases we've dropped the Komodo devices in and been able to quickly ascertain problems," explained Fair.

One of those cases was the office where Executech first met Komodo. Executech installed two Wi-Fi access points, but their performance was not satisfactory. Fair told his technicians to add a Komodo Eye to the network.

Because the Komodo Eye sees the network from the end user perspective, the devices detected four access points. Fair knew he had only deployed two, so this was just the information he needed to diagnose the network problem.

"I don't know that I would ever have been able to discover those," said Fair. "I'd been having wireless problems there for quite a long time and it turned out that there were two access points from the previous IT company left up in the ceiling somewhere that were broadcasting the same SSID as mine."

Fair said the Komodo team has always been responsive when Executech has questions, and has even tweaked its software to support Executech. "I have 60 techs and they are all welcome to call Komodo directly," said Fair.

More calls from IT personnel can mean fewer calls from end users of the Wi-Fi network. The Komodo Eye is specifically designed to apprehend network vulnerabilities before they develop into trouble tickets. Network problems may be hiding in plain sight, but it can take the right technology to recognize them.



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