

Sigma Uptime

go with the
PROS

Sigma's unified support infrastructure ensures efficiency, reliability and predictable IT costs.

UPTIME

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REASONS CUSTOMERS CHOOSE SIGMA SOLUTIONS

S **TRENGTH** – Sigma has an unmatched ability to respond to customer needs due to our scale, locale and experience in the data center. We are small enough to deliver local, personalized service yet large enough to handle highly complex project requirements.

I **NOVATION** – Our goal is to help customers leverage IT solutions to streamline business processes, drive innovation and reduce time to market. To that end, Sigma delivers technologies from industry-leading manufacturers coupled with consulting and engineering services that maximize business value.

G **UIDANCE** – Our customers turn to us for expert solution design and project governance services that accelerate the success of their IT initiatives. Sigma mitigates our customers' risks through our experience and commitment to excellence in everything we do.

M **ANAGEMENT** – Sigma is uniquely positioned to serve as a single point of contact for full lifecycle management, maintenance and support of converged and integrated technologies. Our expertise across the data center and strong relationships with industry leaders enable us to quickly resolve problems in today's complex IT environment.

A **GILITY** – Sigma's comprehensive services enable our customers to partner with one technology provider for solution design, implementation and ongoing service. Sigma serves as the focal point for initiatives incorporating diverse technologies and multiple IT disciplines.

SIGMA
SOLUTIONS

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4 **Go with the Pros**

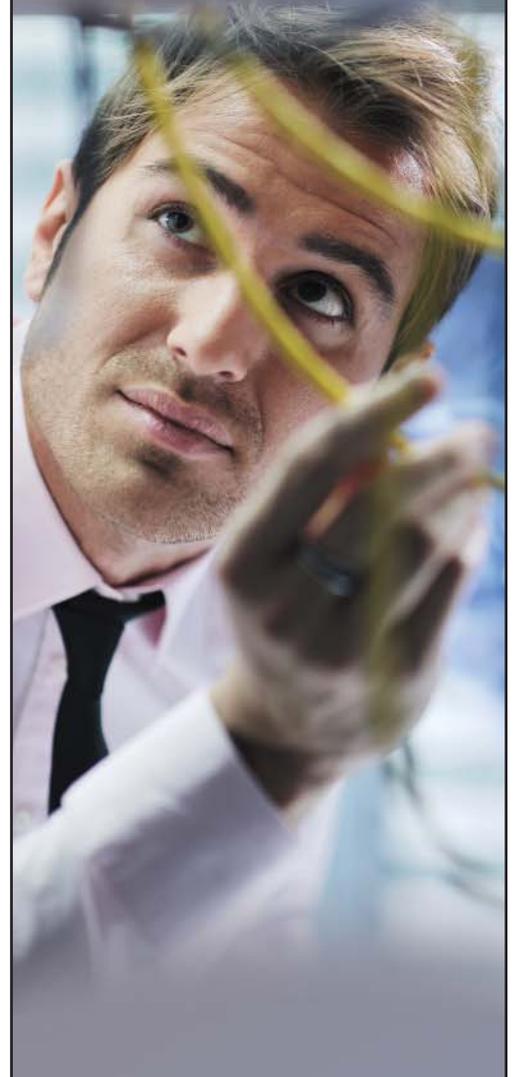
The increasing complexity of today's data center requires dedicated operational resources that can distract from an organization's core business. Sigma's unified support infrastructure provides customers with operational and technical support, professional services and organizational resourcing in a comprehensive framework designed for today's complex environment.

8 **Flirting with Change**

Many organizations are falling head over heels for thin-client and zero-client computing. These stripped-down machines are the ideal partners for desktop virtualization solutions, allowing organizations to control costs, improve security, reduce energy consumption and streamline desktop management.

10 **SOX Turns 10**

The decade-old Sarbanes-Oxley (SOX) Act has moved beyond being just a regulatory obligation. Today it is viewed as part of a larger governance, risk management and compliance (GRC) program that is closely integrated with strategic decision-making, aligned with business goals and enabled by technology.



Sigma UPTIME

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Go with the Pros

Sigma's unified support infrastructure provides customers with operational and technical support, professional services and organizational resourcing in a comprehensive framework designed for today's complex environment.

Ramses the Great, perhaps the most illustrious of the ancient Egyptian pharaohs, knew a thing or two about core competencies. During his 67-year reign, Egypt enjoyed a period of great prosperity marked by the construction of many extraordinary temples, statues and obelisks that still stand some 3,500 years later.

Ramses understood his empire's limitations, however. In anticipation of war with Egypt's long-time nemesis, the Hittites, Ramses augmented his army with thousands of professional soldiers. He was acting on a principle that has become common in today's business world: Focus on what you do best, and bring in outside experts for the rest.

Sigma Solutions helps customers do that through a unified support structure that encompasses IT-Operations-as-a-Service, professional services, organizational resourcing, first-call technical support and lab facilities. These services work in concert to ensure efficiency, reliability and a predictable cost structure for complex, multivendor IT environments.

"Sigma delivers its support services as part of a strategic relationship with each customer," said John Flores, Vice President of Marketing, Sigma Solutions. "Because we offer a comprehensive, unified suite of support services, we are able to provide a customized solution designed to help customers reduce risk and meet their goals and objectives. With Sigma as a support partner, companies can concentrate on their core business and rely upon Sigma to get the rest done."

Relieving Operational Complexity

The increasing complexity of today's data center requires dedicated operational resources that can distract from an organization's core business. Nearly 80 percent of the typical IT budget is consumed by maintenance, management and support, with only 20 percent earmarked for innovation. Yet many IT organizations lack the resources they need to effectively support growing numbers of IT services with increasingly stringent SLAs.

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Sigma's engineers maintain top-level certifications from leading vendors, giving them the up-to-the-minute knowledge needed to implement end-to-end data center solutions



Sigma is adept at locating specialists with hard-to-find skill sets. Access to Sigma's certified engineers, regional labs, training, partner web sites and other industry resources helps further reduce risk and secure a positive return on investment.

Sigma's IT-Operations-as-a-Service solution brings together the people, processes and technology needed to help relieve this burden and optimize IT operations. Sigma delivers 24x7 monitoring, patch management, vendor management and auditable remote support using process-driven methodologies that ensure consistent results.

"IT-Operations-as-a-Service addresses the systemic problems in many operational environments," said Brian Nettles, VP of Operations and CIO, Sigma Solutions. "This solution combines remote infrastructure management, field services and support, enabling customers to out-task select operational activities while remaining in control of the organization's business and technology objectives."

Sigma's IT-Operations-as-a-Service solution is designed to increase IT productivity while reducing costs and risk through proactive system management and rapid problem resolution. Sigma provides a monthly flat-rate cost structure yet can scale rapidly to meet changing business requirements.

"Our highly disciplined approach enables us to provide competitive pricing while improving the performance and reliability of your IT infrastructure. Sigma can deliver significant cost savings through greater productivity, increased uptime,

more efficient operations and optimized personnel costs," Nettles said.

Real-World Solutions

Solving real-world business challenges requires an understanding of how to apply best-of-breed technologies to streamline operations, improve customer service and boost the bottom line. Organizations also need strong IT skills across the technology lifecycle in order to gain the greatest return on their technology investments.

Sigma provides a single, trusted source for design and architecture consulting and assessment services that span the full breadth of today's data center. Sigma's strength lies in creating tightly integrated solutions that improve IT's ability to respond to changing requirements and new initiatives.

"Through our "C.I.O." delivery methodology — Consult, Implement and Operate — we take a holistic approach designed to maximize your IT investments," said Rick Eddings, VP of Professional Services, Sigma Solutions. "We work to understand your current and future business requirements, and define a vendor-agnostic roadmap and strategic vision that will deliver a rapid time-to-value."

Sigma has built a top-notch professional services organization within a framework that empowers individuals at all levels to go "above and beyond" for customers. Sigma has the bench depth and cross-functional capabilities to meet each customer's project requirements. In addition, Sigma's engineers maintain top-level certifications from leading vendors, giving them the up-to-the-minute knowledge needed to implement end-to-end data center solutions.

"This industry expertise is backed by a delivery methodology that ensures a consistent, high-quality outcome for each engagement," Eddings said. "We leverage our experience and repeatable processes to reduce the risk of your technology implementations."



Organizational Resourcing: Expertise as a Service

Few organizations have all the subject-matter experts they need in-house to tackle complex technology projects or large-scale, iterative deployments. Traditional staff augmentation services seek to fill these resource requirements quickly and efficiently, but often at the expense of quality.

Sigma's organizational resourcing service — Sigma Match — goes beyond traditional staff augmentation to provide skilled personnel who can hit the ground running, giving customers rapid, on-demand access to experts in a wide range of IT disciplines. Sigma's own subject-matter experts use a proven, documented and trademarked process to thoroughly vet each candidate's technical skills. Sigma also matches each candidate to important intangibles specific to the customer's organization.

“Matchability is our trademarked process that addresses the often-overlooked intangibles that ultimately determine if a resource is the right fit for an organization,” said Chris Champion, Director, Organizational Resourcing, Sigma Solutions. “Through years of experience, we have found common factors — such as culture, environment and even attire — that impact the success of a particular individual within an organization. Sigma Match looks beyond technical skills to provide the ideal resources for each assignment.”

Sigma is adept at locating specialists with hard-to-find skill sets. In addition, Sigma Match resources are continually supported by Sigma's expert technical team. Access to Sigma's certified engineers, regional labs, training, partner web sites and other industry resources helps further reduce risk and secure a positive return on investment.

First-Call Support

Sigma's First-Call Technical Support Center provides a reliable, responsive and customer-focused alternative to vendor support. Sigma's certified engineers serve as a single point of contact for technical support requests across a wide range of data center technologies — 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Sigma's dedicated First-



Call Support team will diagnose and troubleshoot the problem or facilitate seamless escalation as appropriate.

“Sigma owns each support call from cradle to grave for rapid problem resolution and customer satisfaction,” said Nettles. “Our collaborative support methods ensure that all needed resources are brought to bear quickly to solve tough challenges. Plus, Sigma's dedicated First-Call team gets to know each customer's IT environment and business requirements to provide the most effective support available.”

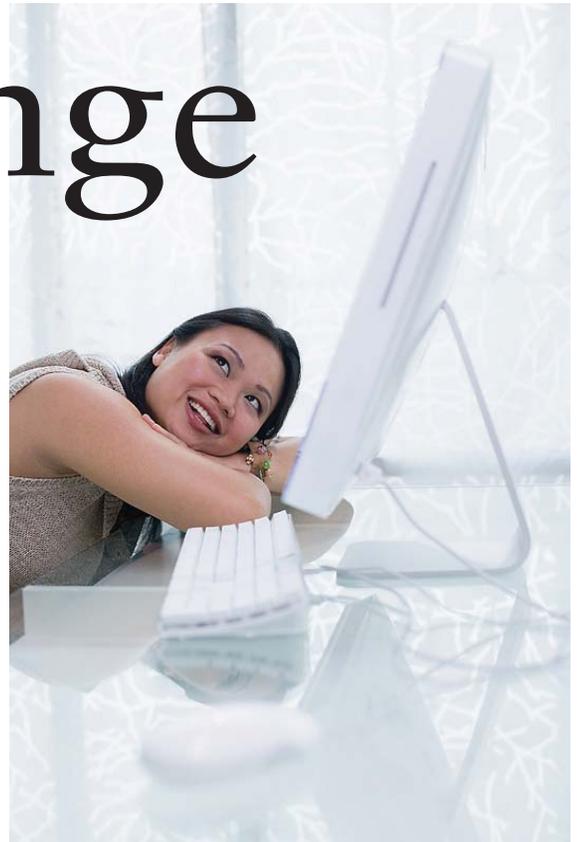
Sigma's Technical Support Center features an extensive, multiplatform systems lab to aid in problem duplication and troubleshooting. The lab also can be used for hands-on demonstrations, training, upgrade support and more.

Ramses the Great and his for-hire army defeated the Hittites and brought Egypt to the height of its imperial power. In doing so, he demonstrated that bringing in experts for difficult tasks makes good sense. Sigma's unified support structure provides a one-stop source for leading expertise, project and operational resources and technical support. With Sigma as a partner, organizations can win the tug-of-war between IT requirements and budget constraints, and achieve their business and technology goals.

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Flirting *with* Change

Many organizations are falling head over heels for thin-client and zero-client computing. Is it a match for your environment?



Thin, uncomplicated, reliable and secure. Suitable for long-term relationship.

Sure, that could describe a personals ad on craigslist. But it is also a fairly accurate representation of thin-client computing. A recent Thin Client Vendor Landscape report, published by Info-Tech Research Group, predicts thin clients will continue to entice enterprises away from traditional desktops because of their security and cost benefits. Thin clients are less expensive, are more reliable and generally require less power than PCs.

“Going thin is about more than saving on electricity bills — the projected benefits go well beyond that. But cost is one benefit businesses are unlikely to ignore,” said Laura Hansen-Kohls, senior research analyst for Info-Tech Research Group.

Thin clients are the ideal partners for desktop virtualization solutions, in which the desk-

top environment, applications and data reside on a centralized server. A thin client has its own memory, processor and network connectivity but no hard drive — or any of the baggage that goes with it. IT is freed from the tasks of patching operating systems, installing and updating applications, and ensuring that data is protected on each and every desktop. And as they face the prospect of upgrading to Windows 7 and/or Windows 8, more organizations may embrace the thin-client alternative.

However, there is a fresh face in town that is attracting a lot of attention. So-called zero-client or ultra-thin-client solutions take thin-client computing to the next level. Which will win the hearts of desktop administrators?

A Lot of Experience

Thin clients have been around for a while. In fact, the thin-client computing concept grew out of the old mainframe environment, in which

“dumb terminals” provided the interface to centralized applications. And “interface” pretty much describes a thin client’s function. In essence, a thin client accepts the user’s keystrokes and mouse movements and sends them to the application, then accepts the application’s video output and displays it for the user.

Thin clients began seeing renewed interest as relief for the high cost of PC management and support, but their mainframe legacy tarnished their reputation somewhat. Critics saw them as character-oriented devices unsuited to today’s graphics-intensive environment. It takes more processing power and bandwidth to process graphics, and more still to handle multimedia, offsetting some of the benefits of thin-client computing.

However, thin clients have continued to evolve along with the marketplace. The leading manufacturers of thin-client solutions offer an array of options suited to a variety of end-user and application requirements. Some support Windows and Linux operating systems as well as specialized “thin” OSs. The most powerful provide support for voice, video and rich media, multiple displays, wireless connectivity, and more. These solutions provide a robust end-user experience while enabling organizations to capitalize on desktop virtualization.

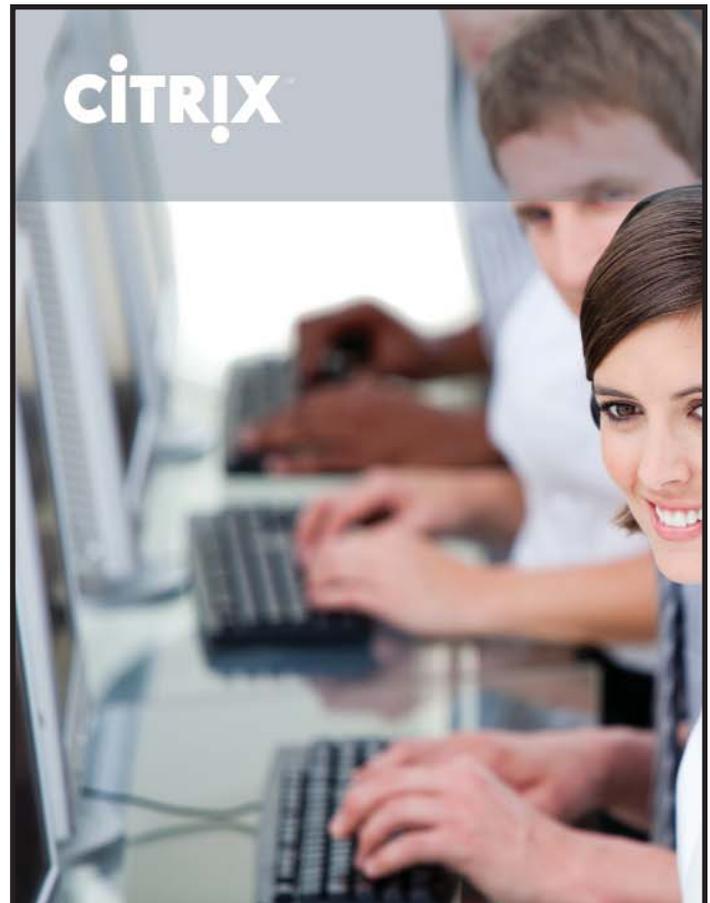
Low Maintenance

Of course, not every end-user needs those kinds of features. If the key is to minimize desktop acquisition and administration costs, it’s important to select the simplest device for each application. And with no memory, processor or operating system, the zero client is about as uncomplicated as it gets.

The zero client is essentially a connectivity device optimized for the desktop virtualization environment. Zero-client solutions include software that runs inside each user’s virtualized desktop and routes data to and from a zero-client device, which typically includes an Ethernet jack, a VGA plug, audio input and output connections and USB connectors for input devices. Direct connectivity between the zero client and the host software eliminates the need for network protocols that can increase network overhead and degrade performance.

Zero clients offer all of the benefits of thin clients, with a lower cost per unit. What’s more, zero clients consume much less power than their thin client and PC counterparts — some as little as three watts.

Neither thin clients nor zero clients are right for everyone. They’re not sufficient for power users who need to do a lot of local processing with applications, for example. But for many organizations seeking to control costs, improve security, reduce energy consumption and streamline desktop management, thin-client and zero-client computing is a match made in heaven.



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SOX Turns 10

Despite controversy, financial regulations lay groundwork for significant IT governance and automation improvements.

Born out of the collapse of Enron, WorldCom and Tyco, the Sarbanes-Oxley (SOX) Act is now 10 years old. Designed to enhance the reliability of financial reporting and to improve audit quality, SOX compliance has moved beyond being just a regulatory obligation. Today it is viewed as part of a larger governance, risk management and compliance (GRC) program that is closely integrated with strategic decision-making, aligned with business goals and enabled by technology.

“The SOX Act set in motion a flurry of regulatory activity geared toward building more-responsible businesses and protecting stakeholders. Since then, several major regulations have been introduced in the U.S.,” said Michael Rasmussen, president of GRC advisory firm Corporate Integrity. “SOX compliance initiatives are now being seamlessly integrated with other crucial GRC processes such as policy management, enterprise risk management and internal audits.”

GRC provides a framework that allows organizations to strike an appropriate balance between business reward and risk. When applied specifically to IT, effective GRC programs deliver quantifiable business benefits by improving data protection, regulatory compliance and IT service levels. A study by the IT Policy Compliance group found that organizations with mature GRC programs increase revenues by 17 percent, profits by 14 percent and customer satisfaction by 18 percent — while also reducing financial losses from the theft or loss of customer data by 96 percent.

‘Embedding Accountability’

“Fundamentally, IT GRC is concerned with two objectives: delivering value to the business and mitigating business risks from IT,” said Everett Johnson, chairman of the Strategy Advisory Council at ISACA. “Successful organizations accomplish these goals by aligning the business and IT strategy, and embedding accountability for effective IT into the organization, beginning with top leadership.”

Given the GRC benefits that have grown from SOX compliance, many organizations surveyed by Pricewaterhouse

Coopers (PwC) claimed that even if Sarbanes-Oxley disappeared they would continue to pursue its requirements. For these organizations, the reason for implementing robust policies and controls is not just to pass regulatory compliance exams or audits, but to establish an enterprise-wide culture of accountability, transparency and risk-resilience.

Two out of three respondents to the PwC survey said SOX and other compliance initiatives helped their organizations uncover control problems, and 65 percent said SOX has helped them better understand their own business. In some cases, according to the PwC report, companies’ compliance efforts “are revealing weaknesses in controls and business processes, and accelerating their efforts to remediate these problems through control optimization, process improvement and automation.” By reworking existing, subpar controls, some organizations reported improving their use of valuable data and resources. In addition, 20 percent of respondents say complying with Sarbanes-Oxley has helped them reduce fraud.

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Skeptics Remain

Since SOX was enacted on July 30, 2002, with an overwhelming majority in both houses of Congress, reactions to it have been varied. Critics say it has imposed an unnecessary cost burden on companies regulated by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). Proponents, meanwhile, say business accountability and transparency have increased while internal controls have become stronger — especially with CEOs and CFOs taking individual responsibility to certify and approve their regulatory filings.

According to a majority of executives surveyed by the consulting firm Protiviti, corporations’ internal control over financial reporting has improved “significantly” or “moderately” in the 10 years since SOX became law.

“Sarbanes-Oxley has had its share of controversy in the past, but nearly 70 percent of respondents in our survey reported that the internal control over financial reporting structure in their organizations has improved since compliance with Sarbanes-Oxley Section 404 became a require-

ment,” said Brian Christensen, Protiviti’s executive vice president, global internal audit. “Companies are still learning and working to improve continuously the quality of their internal controls as well as the effectiveness and efficiency of their compliance processes, even 10 years later.”

Automating Processes

These efforts to improve SOX compliance have contributed to another unexpected benefit — IT automation. The Act’s focus on internal controls has forced IT departments to think strategically and modernize their controls and processes. The majority of those surveyed by Protiviti said they are now focused on automating SOX compliance processes. Organizations are fast replacing spreadsheets and other cumbersome manual tools with innovative technology for automating controls and continuous control monitoring.

“Automating key controls likely represents the ‘final frontier’ in terms of significant Sarbanes-Oxley process improvement and cost savings,” said Jim DeLoach, Protiviti’s senior SOX practice leader.

Process automation has led to better management of risk intelligence, and has helped organizations integrate their “Big Data” stores with business applications, security systems and IT infrastructure. With this foundation, organizations now are also integrating data from mobile devices, cloud applications, and social media, and mapping it to enterprise risks and compliance requirements.

“In the initial years of SOX, it was challenging for companies to comply with the stringent requirements for controls, audits and monitoring,” said Keri Dawson, vice president of GRC solutions provider MetricStream. “But over the years, they have learned how to not only optimize SOX compliance but also harmonize controls across regulations, integrate SOX with their extended GRC programs, and improve reporting and visibility into compliance for senior management. More importantly, they have started embedding SOX controls into business processes so that compliance is made more efficient, while the business grows stronger and more risk-resilient.”

SARBANES-OXLEY

10 Years Later

Changes in Internal Controls



PLANS TO AUTOMATE



VALUE AND BENEFITS



Companies, regardless of size or year of compliance, plan to hold steady with their projected Sarbanes-Oxley compliance spend for the upcoming fiscal year - a possible indicator that organizations believe they have the compliance process well-managed and under control

Source: Protiviti’s “2012 Sarbanes-Oxley Compliance Survey,” available at www.protiviti.com/SOXsurvey. Close to 800 respondents participated in the survey, which was conducted online in the fourth quarter of 2011 and the first quarter of 2012.

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TRANSFORMATION

through IT as a service



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Sigma delivers value through an agile IT environment that responds to changing business objectives and market conditions. We help can help you meet all of today's business technology challenges, including:

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- Consumerization / BYOD
- Collaboration
- Big Data
- Mobile Device Management

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