

Reliance Steel & Aluminum Co.

Host access solutions ensure secure application access with improved user experience.



Who is Reliance Steel & Aluminum Co.?

Reliance Steel & Aluminum Co., a Fortune 500 company, serves over 125,000 customers primarily by providing metals processing, inventory management services, and quick delivery. Through its Family of Companies network, Reliance Steel & Aluminum Co. offers a full line of more than 100,000 metal products. Quick turnaround, high quality, and other services save time, labor, and expense for its customers, reducing overall manufacturing costs while increasing profitability across many industries.

“Reflection Desktop and MSS just make sense to us, especially when we looked at other solutions which were proving cost prohibitive. MSS’s ability to deliver config files securely and efficiently saves us many man hours. We used to send our users their config files manually which complicated central control.”

JEFF RICHARDS

Senior Manager of Virtualization and Cloud Platforms
Reliance Steel & Aluminum Co.

Up-to-Date Host Connectivity Technology Required

With many companies making up the Reliance Steel & Aluminum Co. family, it comes as no surprise that several different ERP systems are in use across the group. For years, the organization engaged with Attachmate and its KEA! terminal emulation solution to provide consistent host access to core mainframe-based ERP systems. However, Jeff Richards, Senior Manager of Virtualization and Cloud Platforms at Reliance Steel & Aluminum Co., was clear that a change was necessary: “KEA! had been out of support for some years and we felt that the limited functionality did not suit our business objectives going forward. There was no intelligence in the solution, such as API calls or screen reconfiguration opportunities. We needed a solution that could run on multiple Citrix servers, managed through our Microsoft Active Directory. When Micro Focus (now part of OpenText™) acquired Attachmate in 2014, we saw an opportunity in its next generation of host connectivity solutions.”

OpenText™ Reflection Desktop is designed to facilitate a fast and secure application access. It teams particularly well with OpenText™ Host Access Management and Security Server (MSS) to integrate host access control and improve security. Reliance Steel & Aluminum Co.



At a Glance

- **Industry**
Manufacturing
- **Location**
California, USA
- **Challenge**
Provide secure host access to a variety of ERP systems while improving user experience and license compliance
- **Products and Services**
[Reflection Desktop](#)
[Host Access Management and Security Server \(MSS\)](#)
- **Success Highlights**
 - + Improved security with fully-integrated two-factor authentication
 - + Simplified solution support, maintenance, and management
 - + Enhanced user experience and productivity
 - + Clear license compliance

“Reflection Desktop and MSS have improved our user experience and we now have a clear central view of who has access to what systems to ensure correct licensing and security compliance. Micro Focus (now part of OpenText™) is a valued partner with a team that has gone above and beyond to support us.”

FRANÉ BALJKAS

Systems Engineer, Citrix
Reliance Steel & Aluminum Co.

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contracts for the US government and needs to adhere to strict security regulations. Developing a standard around host connectivity with up-to-date technology supports this partnership. It will also smooth the integration of new companies into the Reliance Steel & Aluminum Co. family, while simplifying license compliance, as well as solution support, maintenance, and management.

Two-Factor Authentication Support and Improved License Compliance

The team had some specific requirements, as Frané Baljkas, Systems Engineer, Citrix, with Reliance Steel & Aluminum Co., explains: “We support about 5,000 users, working from any one of our 300 locations. We needed to be able to limit the number of sessions with Citrix, based on Active Directory group membership. We also saw a need to implement two-factor authentication in combination with a device trust model. This introduced integration challenges with Okta and Duo, our authentication partners. Micro Focus (now part of OpenText™) really listened to us and helped find solutions, even when it meant building custom code within Reflection Desktop.”

The OpenText team supported Reliance Steel & Aluminum Co. with add-on modules and the conversion of different macros into the new Reflection Desktop system so that the whole organization can enjoy seamless one-stop host access. The benefits were clear, according to Richards: “Reflection Desktop and MSS just make sense to us, especially when we looked at other solutions which were proving cost prohibitive. MSS’s ability to deliver config files securely and efficiently to

end-users’ devices saves us many man hours. We used to send our users their config files manually which complicated central control. We now use MSS to improve security for users moving from HTTP to HTTPS and we implemented a metering method which supports our license compliance.”

Excellent Partnership Improves User Experience and Productivity

Active Directory, user group rules, and all internal application access processes are managed through MSS, which means Reliance Steel & Aluminum Co. does not need additional integration to provide secure application access. The provisioning team leverages MSS to provide secure user access, making it easier and quicker to onboard new employees. Although the initial aim was a transparent move for end users so that their day-to-day interaction with systems wouldn’t change, over time the team took the opportunity to add functionality to some of the tools. Connectivity to Microsoft Office suite was implemented, as was the use of macros and the ability to copy email content easily—eliminating rekeying, saving time, and improving user productivity. The Reliance Steel & Aluminum Co. credit department benefited from process automation, which reduced their daily processing time considerably while MSS load balancing improved the overall system performance.

Baljkas concludes: “Our experience with Micro Focus (now part of OpenText™) is excellent. The team partners with us on special requests and we work side by side with the best engineers to come up with innovative solutions. We now have a wonderfully supported host

access solution with a clear path to the future. Reflection Desktop and MSS have improved our user experience and we now have a clear central view of who has access to what systems to ensure correct licensing and security compliance. Micro Focus (now part of OpenText™) is a valued partner with a team that has gone above and beyond to support us.”

Watch the Reliance Steel & Aluminum Co. Video



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