

Customer Success Story

Quest Software is Just What the Doctor Ordered for PacifiCare

Synopsis

PacifiCare Health Systems, a leading managed health-care services provider, decided to implement Quest Software's Migrator to ease the merger of two separate Windows NT networks. With Migrator, PacifiCare was able to automate the migration of over 4,500 users and 250 global groups while appending the local groups and user rights on 67 servers located in ten states – all within a 16-hour span.

The Challenge

California-based PacifiCare Health Systems, one of the nation's leading managed health-care services providers, had to absorb nearly two million new members with the acquisition of FHP International Corp., a diversified health-care services company with HMO subsidiaries in 11 states and Guam. Underlying the successful conversion, which nearly doubled membership, was the swift, efficient merger of two separate Windows NT networks – with a total of 10,000 domain accounts and 200 Windows NT servers nationwide – into a master network.

Since each company had been managing its own Windows NT domain server accounts with separate naming conventions and different administration methods, the newly merged enterprise faced the challenge of establishing universal standards for naming conventions, rules and regulations for the account definitions, access controls, account policies and home directory structures. With central management and standard naming conventions recognized as essential, it was decided to create a new master accounts domain.

An added benefit of the domain consolidations and master domain creation was to prepare PacifiCare for a smoother adoption of Windows 2000. (PacifiCare is a Microsoft Premier Site, has access to Windows 2000 information and betas, and is planning Windows 2000 adoption to utilize new functionality including the Active Directory Service.)

The catalyst harmonizing the integration was Quest Software's Windows Migration and Management Tools. After considering, and then rejecting, the option of maintaining multiple systems, the PacifiCare IS team worked closely with Microsoft Premier Support and Quest Software's Professional Services teams to plot and execute the domain conversions. The PacifiCare team included Principal Systems Analysts Dave Mudron and

Cindy Ruff, Principal Systems Engineer Randy Carter, and Enterprise NT Systems Architect Pat Garrett. Starting in July 1997, within one month they moved from examining if the melding was possible, to planning, then launching the process.

The Solution

A three-phase schedule was set with the goals – which Quest helped to meet – of maximizing “up time” and minimizing costs during the transition while maintaining original environment rollback capability during all stages of the transition.

Phase One consisted of evaluating PacifiCare’s requirements. The integration involved migrating user accounts, global groups and user profiles/logon scripts to eliminate the need for multiple accounts and trust relationships. Facilitating the transition from a multi-domain environment to a master domain model, Migrator was utilized to migrate users and global groups to the new domain and update local group memberships, access control lists (ACLs) and user rights, ensuring the new accounts retained the same access capabilities as the old accounts.

Migrator enabled PacifiCare to choose which users and global groups were to be moved, maximize flexibility in deleting multiple accounts and passwords, and allow selectivity about who could traverse which domains and access which resources. Because Migrator is a non-destructive tool, both new and old accounts could be simultaneously active as the transition process proceeds.

Phase Two involved making the global changes to the Windows NT network to prepare the pilot site (in Colorado Springs) and the FHP sites that would remain. These changes included migrating all FHP user accounts and global groups into PacifiCare’s single master Windows NT domain. The migrated accounts were appended to the local groups, ACLs and user rights throughout the FHP domain so that FHP users retained access to their original Windows NT accounts until they received instruction on using new PacifiCare NT accounts.

The ongoing Phase Three involves building confidence in the domain reconfiguration process while the conversion project gains internal support from both PacifiCare and FHP staff. As FHP staff is educated on the use of Migrator, the pilot site is continually updated to allow the FHP users to log into the PacifiCare Windows NT domain.

The final migration of the remaining FHP sites by FHP resources will be conducted over a two-year period. In the meantime, PacifiCare can easily support and maintain the single master domain with local administrators managing their own servers and controlling the resources and security in their environment. Since the bulk of the project is now behind them, Carter, Mudron and Ruff are transferring their experience and launching a systems design and domain management and consulting firm to assist other enterprises with similar projects.

The Bottom Line

In total, some 4,500 user accounts and 250 global groups in the former FHP domains were to be moved into PacifiCare's new master Windows NT domain, joining some 6,500 PacifiCare user accounts – all within a 16-hour span. Eventually, a total of 3,000 to 4,000 duplicative account domains would be eliminated. Successfully migrating such a large volume of users in such a short time span saved PacifiCare months of work and multiple resources, allowing improved operational efficiency as the transition continued.

With Migrator successful in automating the domain reconfigurations, and the FINAL scripts smoothing the ongoing systems merger, the products from Quest Software are just what the doctor ordered.

About PacifiCare Health Systems

PacifiCare Health Systems is one of the nation's largest health care services companies. Primary operations include health insurance products for employer groups and Medicare beneficiaries in eight states and Guam, serving approximately 3.4 million members. Other specialty products and operations include behavioral health services, life and health insurance, dental and vision services and pharmacy benefit and medical management.