

City of Saint Petersburg, Florida

City Cuts Costs, Increases Performance by Migrating Servers from Novell Netware to Windows 2000 and Active Directory

The City of Saint Petersburg's IT department provides email and other computing services to various municipal departments. The city's IT department also offers helpdesk support all the way to the desktop for some 1,200 city employees.

With the aid of Microsoft Consulting Services (MCS), the city recently migrated its entire enterprise network to the Windows 2000 Server platform in order to lower costs and streamline IT-support activities. Moving from a "half-Novell and half-Microsoft architecture" to one built entirely on Microsoft platforms has allowed the city to eliminate one enterprise licensing fee from its IT budget while also boosting network performance, according to Judy Owen, senior network systems engineer, City of Saint Petersburg.

"We realized that we could save about 25 percent on license fees starting this year if we could complete our Windows 2000 migration before we needed to renew next year's Novell Master License Agreement (MLA)," says Owen. "After I showed that cost analysis to our CIO, there was no turning back, so the ability to migrate quickly and easily was definitely an important factor in our decision to go forward."

Prior to migration, the city was using Microsoft NT 4.0 servers for Internet and firewall functions as well as for application hosting, while its document-imaging system was already based on Windows 2000 Server. On the other hand, its file/print management and directory (NDS) systems and email functions were running on Novell Netware 5.0 platforms.

While migrating the city's servers was a relatively clear-cut process, the biggest challenge lay in converting the network profiles—then based on Novell Directory Services (NDS)—of the city's 1,200 users spread over eight locations, Owen says.

During the migration process, all of the agency's NDS-based network objects—such as users, workstations, printers, etc.—would need to be seamlessly ported to Windows 2000 Active Directory, which if performed manually, would have required too many man-hours. As a result, the MCS project team, retained for nine days during the first three weeks of implementation, recommended using "FastLane NDS Migrator," an automated, off-the-shelf migration tool from Quest Software (Irvine, Calif.), a Microsoft Gold Partner.

Solution Overview

Customer Profile

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Business Situation

The city recently consolidated its entire enterprise network on the Windows 2000 Server platform in order to lower costs and streamline IT-support activities. Moving from a "half-Novell and half-Microsoft architecture" to one built entirely on Microsoft platforms has allowed the city to eliminate one licensing fee from its IT budget while also boosting network performance.

Solution

Benefits

- Consolidating on a single server platform streamlines IT support activities
- Agency was able to lower yearly IT license costs
- Central, automated tools dramatically improved the efficiency of the user/desktop migration process

Software and Services

Windows® 2000 Server
Windows® 2000 Active Directory
Microsoft Consulting Services

Partner

Quest Software
Irvine, Calif.
www.quest.com

Using the NDS Migrator tool, Saint Petersburg's IT staff was able to update all of its user profiles from a central management console, notes Owen. "The Quest utility GUI literally makes migrating user profiles as easy as moving user objects from the left pane on the screen to the right pane." Additionally, the Quest tool ensured that end users were able to access their files on the consolidated Windows 2000 file servers using the same links and network maps they had utilized under the former Netware environment.

"The early planning and organizing performed by the customer was a major advantage," says MCS Consultant Ed McGinn. "The user population was broken up into manageable groups of 30 to 50 users along with the network resources that each group used. This allowed us to publish the migration schedule well in advance to obtain buy-in from all the affected departments."

For example, the agency IT team began its migration process with the 450 users located at the city's Municipal Services Center, its most populous site, before tackling the 150 users at City Hall and moving on to the next largest location. The only activity that had to be performed manually at the desktop level was removing the cumbersome Novell client software from some 800 workstations.

"With users and resources identified and scheduled this way, the process of migrating them was very straightforward and simple," adds MCS' McGinn. "The FastLane NDS migration tool was used to migrate all the users and their resources while the desktop team visited each desktop to remove the Novell client and test all applications."

Beyond lowering network costs and simplifying administration, consolidating on the Windows 2000 Server platform has also resulted in significant performance gains, Owen notes. "Network access without the load of the Netware client software has been notably faster, which was an unexpected bonus for us. Simply removing it from our workstations has made several users comment to me how much better their network performance has become."

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