



A Lesson in Fast and Seamless Migration at Trinity College

Founded in 1592, Trinity College, Dublin, is the oldest and one of the most prestigious of the Republic of Ireland's seven universities. The college has more than 15,000 students and 3,100 academic and research staff. The city centre campus has several off-site locations and boasts beautiful historic architecture as well as modern state-of-the-art facilities..

The Challenge

Trinity College had more than 9,500 network devices (servers, desktops, laptops) and 23,000 network users spread across nine locations. Around 3,000 of the desktops were NT domain based, many of them being multiple user machines, each with potentially hundreds of user profiles.

With four Windows NT4 domains, Trinity faced several issues that prompted the move to Windows 2003 and Active Directory. Main concerns were a lack of desktop control with NT4, as well as virus and patch management problems. With the withdrawal of support for NT4 looming at the end of 2004, a replacement was needed. Trinity College was preparing to embark on a series of projects, including a Microsoft Systems Management Server project and a single sign-on identity management project. They were keen to implement these new initiatives in an Active Directory environment, rather than in an unsupported NT4 domain. Other important drivers towards the move to Active Directory was a desire for better control and manageability of their desktops and to provide dynamic support for the significant number of wireless users at the university.

Constrained by tight timescales and a limited number of staff resources, Trinity College soon realised that a third-party software product was needed to execute a successful migration to Active Directory. The possibility of human error had to be eliminated in order to guarantee little or no impact to the users, zero downtime and seamless migration of user profiles and passwords.

The Quest Solution

Quest Software's Migration Suite for Active Directory was recommended to Trinity College by Microsoft because of its proven ability to migrate large, complex environments in locations worldwide. Other solutions were considered, but they were not as rich in functionality. Quest's Domain Migration Wizard, a key product in the Migration Suite, is designed for NT4 to Active Directory migration projects in distributed networks. Along with migrating to Active Directory, the product is also used for consolidating or splitting Windows NT domains. The other key product in the Quest migration suite, Quest Reporter, provides a view of the networked environment prior to migration, the basis for a well-defined and quantified migration plan.

Trinity College was able to leverage the undo feature in Domain Migration Wizard to test in each stage and ensure a trouble-free migration. Use of the product's rollback feature was not required during the actual migration itself, but the team was glad to have the capability available — just in case.

To migrate various groups of users separately by loading undergraduates, postgraduates and staff into different organisational units (OUs), Trinity College used Domain Migration Wizard's batch processing capability. The college's domain passwords were securely migrated with the users, which allowed all user passwords to remain the same and provided a seamless process for the end users by eliminating any potential security lapses due to password changes.

Trinity used Reporter to determine exactly what was on its network — the various operating systems being used, user accounts, domains, hardware specifications — to establish the best approach to migration. Reporter was also used to highlight and unlock any accounts that were locked as a result of the extra

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—John Murphy,
Assistant Director,
Information System Services
Trinity College

Overview

Headquarters

Dublin, Ireland

Services

Public university

Critical Needs

Solution to provide seamless Active Directory migration with zero downtime.

Solution

Domain Migration Wizard and Quest Reporter

Results

- Reduced migration project downtime by 99 percent
- Successfully migrated users with no downtime

security measures introduced with Active Directory. Post-migration, Trinity College will use Reporter on a daily basis as a security assessment tool, to report on disabled accounts and account lockouts.

The Bottom Line

The risks associated with duration and levels of disruption to the users were minimised thanks to Domain Migration Wizard. Any disruption would have affected productivity, e.g. scheduling timetables and research, which in extreme cases could have potentially affected end-users' incomes. This would have been a PR disaster for the IT department, which prides itself in meeting unusually high levels of user expectation.

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Huge timesavings were made by not having to visit every single desktop to update user profiles (potentially hundreds on each desktop) and check on users. Trinity College estimates that this would have taken about 30 minutes for each of the 3000 desktops, equating to 200 days. Just under half (43 percent) of the desktops were to be migrated during the summer break. Using Quest Domain Migration Wizard, the automated profile update was completed for these 1,300 machines in half a day, representing a 99 percent timesaving. The remaining desktops were migrated in smaller batches at various points during term-time, with similar timesavings.

Trinity College's help desk was manned with extra staff on the changeover day, which received fewer than anticipated requests for support. As a result, the migration progressed significantly faster than expected.

About Quest Software, Inc.

Quest Software, Inc. delivers innovative products that help organizations get more performance and productivity from their applications, databases and Windows infrastructure. Through a deep expertise in IT operations and a continued focus on what works best, Quest helps more than 50,000 customers worldwide meet higher expectations for enterprise IT. Quest Software can be found in offices around the globe and at www.quest.com.

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