

Leading Law Firm Enhances Network Security with Microsoft-Powered Solution

Overview

Country: United Kingdom

Industry: Legal

Customer Profile

Denton Wilde Sapte is a leading international law firm headquartered in the City of London. With an expanding network of offices and associates in Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Business Situation

The company needed to increase desktop control and network security with more efficient application and asset management while maintaining system uptime and maximising employee productivity.

Solution

Denton Wilde Sapte upgraded to Microsoft® Systems Management Server (SMS) 2003 to benefit from new software deployment features, including better support for 2000 desktops and mobile clients.

Benefits

- Faster software deployment
- Better visibility across hardware and software assets
- Increased network security
- Improved employee productivity
- Reliable security patch management

“As well as making our system more secure, [Microsoft] Systems Management Server 2003 also ensures the availability of the data and applications end users need to work effectively.”

Alan Auger, Desktop Systems Manager, Denton Wilde Sapte

International law firm Denton Wilde Sapte must ensure the security of its corporate network at all times. To achieve this, the company has deployed Microsoft® Systems Management Server (SMS) 2003, which improves the management of software deployments and security patches across the global network. Importantly, the technology provides excellent support for mobile workers, who often access the network via slow, unreliable connections. To achieve this, it establishes the speed of existing connections and adjusts the rate of data transfer accordingly. In addition, downloads that are interrupted when connections go down can continue as soon as a link is re-established. SMS 2003 also gives IT staff at Denton Wilde Sapte increased visibility of all hardware and software assets across desktop and mobile environments. As a result, they can monitor software deployments more effectively and ensure that patches have been deployed successfully to guarantee the best possible security.

“Previously, it was impossible to tell if software downloads had been completed successfully. Now, we can use reporting functionality built into SMS 2003 to ensure all our mobile users are working with the latest security patches. This clearly has benefits in terms of improving the overall security of our operation.”

Alan Auger, Desktop Systems Manager,
Denton Wilde Sapte

Situation

Employees at leading international law firm Denton Wilde Sapte depend on mobile access to the corporate network. Many are out of the office for weeks at a time conducting face-to-face meetings with clients. With 12 offices worldwide, it has traditionally been a significant challenge to give these mobile workers access to the information they need. This was partly due to the bandwidth restrictions of the company's legacy IT infrastructure.

In addition, the deployment of productivity applications, upgrades and patches to remote workers depended on Group Policy technology. This worked well where users were well connected to the network, but not where users work remotely for extended periods. As a result, continued use of Group Policy was becoming unwieldy, with clients often processing several Group Policies during a single log-on.

The emergence of technologies such as laptop hibernation also proved a challenge for Denton Wilde Sapte. This is because users no longer log off or on to their machines as often. As a result, log-on scripting was also becoming inefficient as a method of deploying and configuring software applications and security patches.

In addition, asset management was performed using a separate technology – Microsoft® Systems Management Server (SMS) 2.0, which was no longer comprehensive or dynamic enough to meet the company's asset management requirements.

Separate, unrelated systems for software deployment and asset management also meant that large software packages were taking several days or even weeks to distribute to mobile workers. In addition, it was impossible for IT staff to tell how many

employees had installed the software or security patches successfully on their machines. This uncertainty made budgeting and forecasting difficult and created potentially dangerous system vulnerabilities.

Denton Wilde Sapte needed a new solution that would help it deploy applications, patches and other software assets more effectively and reliably, especially to mobile workers. To achieve this, it needed an asset management system capable of measuring bandwidth available on the corporate network and adjusting transfer rates for software assets accordingly. It also needed to deploy software effectively over low-bandwidth, dial-up connections to ensure the best possible system security.

Solution

To ensure fast, effective deployment of software assets to mobile workers globally, Denton Wilde decided to implement Microsoft Systems Management Server (SMS) 2003. To ensure the success of the project, the company enlisted the help of trusted technology partner Pygmalion Consulting.

Pygmalion, working in conjunction with an in-house technical team, completed the following key activities:

- Training to give Denton Wilde Sapte an understanding of the capabilities of SMS 2003.
- Design of the SMS 2003 architecture
- Creation of a pilot system for testing
- Installation of the live production system, which is fully-integrated with Denton Wilde Sapte's global Active Directory infrastructure
- Deployment of service packs, patches and applications using the new system on a phased basis.
- A proof of concept to test the use of SMS for patch management.

SMS 2003 enables Denton Wilde Sapte IT staff to better understand the current hardware base, existing applications and version information, as well as current service pack and hot-fix status of the system. Software can be deployed to users via network and hardware configuration, information from Active Directory® directory service, a key indexing component of the Microsoft Windows operating system, and group membership data.

The solution offers Web-enabled reporting using more than 120 standard, pre-built reports that cover hardware and software inventory and the progress of software deployments. IT staff can also use standard reports to monitor how and when applications are used on individual machines.

SMS includes functionality to ensure that patches are deployed effectively. It also identifies missing security patches and flags them on a central database so the problem can be addressed.

In addition, the technology improves the deployment of applications and patches to mobile clients because it automatically detects the capacity of the network connection available. It then adjusts the data transfer rate accordingly, ensuring that software is uploaded effectively. Where connections go down, partial downloads to client devices will continue where they left off with no need to restart transmissions.

As mobile users move through geographic locations, they receive software packages and updates from the nearest appropriate installation source and are not required to install software across the enterprise wide area network (WAN). This further ensures that bandwidth is used effectively on the corporate network.

To date, the system has been implemented globally using 15 servers and over 2000 desktop and mobile clients.

Benefits

Faster Software Deployment

The IT department at Denton Wilde Sapte can now deploy new applications, patches and upgrades to mobile users quickly and reliably.

Traditionally, the task of downloading new software updates on mobile clients was slow as a result of low-bandwidth network connections. Now, functionality built into SMS 2003, including Background Intelligent Transfer Services (BITS), checks the speed of the connection and automatically adjusts the speed of the download to ensure success. If a network connection drops, the download continues as soon as it is re-established. All of these features make it much faster and more convenient to update software on mobile clients as well as in the desktop environment.

Alan Auger, Desktop Systems Manager, Denton Wilde Sapte, says: "Not only does the speed of SMS 2003 enable greater efficiency in the IT team. It is also critical where system security is at stake. We can safely say that the technology helps us to protect our operation in the face of fast-moving malicious attacks."

Better Visibility and Increased Security

Reporting functionality built into SMS 2003 enables Denton Wilde Sapte IT staff to stay up to speed with the progress of software deployments at all times. In addition, they also have an accurate picture of the entire IT infrastructure, including the location, configuration, and system status of all assets.

Auger says: "Previously, it was impossible to tell if software downloads had been completed successfully. Now, we can use

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For more information about Denton Wilde Sapte products and services, call +44 (0) 20 7242 1212 or visit the Web site at:

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reporting functionality built into SMS 2003 to ensure all our mobile users are working with the latest security patches. This clearly has benefits in terms of improving the overall security of our operation.”

Increased Employee Productivity

SMS 2003 enables software and patches to be deployed with no disruption to end users. This ensures maximum productivity for Denton Wilde Sapte employees.

Auger says: “As well as making our system more secure, SMS 2003 also ensures the availability of the data and applications end users need to work effectively. In this way, the technology is helping to maximise the productivity of our people and ensure competitive advantage for the organisation.”

Microsoft Windows Server System

Microsoft® Windows Server System™ is a comprehensive, integrated, and interoperable server infrastructure that helps reduce the complexity and costs of building, deploying, connecting, and operating agile business solutions. Windows Server System helps customers create new value for their business through the strategic use of their IT assets. With the Windows Server operating system as its foundation, Windows Server System delivers dependable infrastructure for data management and analysis; enterprise integration; customer, partner, and employee portals; business process automation; communications and collaboration; and core IT operations including security, deployment, and systems management. For more information about

Windows Server System, go to:

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Software and Services

■ Products

- Microsoft SQL Server 2000
- Microsoft Systems Management Server 2003

- Microsoft Windows 2000 Server
- Microsoft Windows XP Professional

Partners

- Pygmalion Consulting

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