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Scottish Homes

Working smarter with Windows 2000

CASE STUDY

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Situation

Scottish Homes' is an organisation of 1000 people spread across 25 sites. The organisation collaborates and communicates across a Wide Area Network (WAN) and its entire IT infrastructure is maintained by Zonelever Network Solutions; a company previously part of Scottish Homes.

The organisation's network is based on Microsoft Windows NT and a Single Master Domain model, with resource domains located at various sites. The Central Hub of activity (Master/Accounts domain) is situated at Roseberry House whilst a Citrix system runs networked terminal software.

At present, Scottish Homes' messaging platform is based on Novell technology. A GroupWise domain supports all email functions and is hosted on a NetWare server. However, multiple post offices spread across the organisation are largely hosted on NT Servers. GroupWise is also used as a collaboration tool and to provide a Web access client for many end-users. The platform supports an SMTP Gateway for communication with the Internet.

The Pygmalion Computer Group has implemented a pilot upgrade project to Windows 2000. Pygmalion has designed two new Windows 2000 forests for Scottish Homes, and implemented the migration of its messaging platform from GroupWise to Microsoft

Solution Overview

Company

Scottish Homes

Software and Services

- [Microsoft Active Directory](#)
- [Microsoft Exchange 2000 Server](#)
- [Microsoft Exchange 5.5 Server](#)
- [Microsoft Office 2000 Professional](#)
- [Microsoft Windows 2000 Professional](#)
- [Microsoft Windows 2000 Server](#)

Vertical Industries

Public and Nonprofit Sector

Country/Region

United Kingdom

Audiences

Business Decision Makers

Exchange.

The entire development project is to be deployed gradually, with roll-out for the entire organisation expected to take approximately 10 months. However, the pilot across two sites was completed in 5 weeks.

Solution

The Pygmalion Computer group worked with Zonelever Network Solutions [IT Services Scottish Homes] to update the network and messaging infrastructure. Two new server forests were built to run Microsoft Windows 2000, to support Scottish Homes' WAN, and to upgrade its messaging platform to Microsoft Exchange Server 5.5.

It was decided that the existing network infrastructure would not be upgraded to Windows 2000. Instead, and due to the heterogeneous network environment, two completely new server forests were built. This leaves the current system undisturbed, to provide a fall-back resource if required.

The first phase of development was the completion of an Active Directory design for the entire organisation. The Active Directory will form a single domain covering all Scottish Homes' remote sites. An elaborate hierarchy of Organisational Units, based on departmental functions (as suggested by the clients) has been put in place, with the actual physical sites placed at the very bottom of the tree. Various roles including GC and FSMO have been designed taking account of fault tolerance as well as replication implications across the WAN. An elaborate TCP/IP architecture has also been prepared to integrate the existing infrastructure with the new one. This includes DNS and DHCP design issues.

Subsequent phases will involve the testing of current/legacy applications on Windows 2000 as well as Microsoft Terminal Server. This is based on the prioritisation of applications from a business-critical as well as mission-critical perspective.

Most of the client machines are Compaq desktops supporting network boot. As a result, the Windows 2000 Remote Installation Server has been deployed to cater for a fully automated installation of Windows 2000 Professional, as well as the set of software applications that are required by most users. This will ensure the smooth deployment of Windows 2000 and other applications.

The migration to Exchange Server was also planned in different phases. The pilot consisted of distinct phases of migration as well co-existence with the GroupWise system. This required the GroupWise connector to communicate with the GroupWise Post Office via the appropriate gateway. There is an ideal opportunity for Scottish Homes to plan early in 2000 for a phased transition to Exchange 2000.

Benefits

The move to Microsoft Windows 2000 will provide Scottish Homes with, management, support and efficiency savings. Windows 2000's Active Directory Services will simplify flexible working, whilst significantly reduce related management costs. Meanwhile, Windows 2000's Remote Installation Server will offer Scottish Homes the ability to reduce support costs through remote installations and maintenance.

Keith Skeaping, Head of IT at Scottish Homes, says: "Windows 2000 represents a natural evolution from a mixture of Windows 95, Windows NT, and assorted email and office software. It offers particular advantages to us in integrating office working, using a single active directory. We don't expect to reach a universal, flexible and resilient environment overnight, as a basis for smarter working but we would like to be there by the end of 2000."

Windows 2000 Professional will offer Scottish Homes savings in terms of desktop support. The operating system's IntelliMirror self-repairing functionality will reduce desktop support costs and increase user efficiency.

Scottish Homes messaging, desktop and server systems will be consolidated under the move to Microsoft Windows 2000 and Exchange 5.5. End users will be provided with a consistent environment across messaging and office productivity software. This simpler environment will increase user productivity and eliminate the need for training across different software products.

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