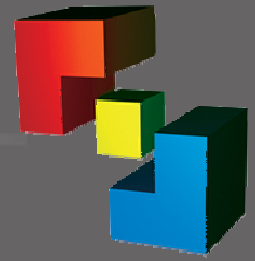


Case Study The H.W. Wilson Company



Exchange Server 2003 Migration

Award-winning Microsoft Gold Certified Partner **The Henson Group, Inc. (THG)** performed a Microsoft Exchange Server 2003 Cluster deployment migration, including a challenging Active Directory configuration, for H.W. Wilson Company to provide greater messaging functionality and stability.

THE
HENSON[®]
GROUP



Project Vitals

Industry: Publishing

Customer Profile: H. W. Wilson is a leading publisher of reference materials and databases primarily for the library market.

Business Situation: The publisher had an existing Exchange Server 2000 environment that previously met its messaging needs. However, as the company expanded, its existing architecture could no longer provide the functionality and reliability it required.

Solution: THG performed an Exchange Server 2003 Cluster deployment migration, including a Windows Server 2003 upgrade and challenging Active Directory configuration.

Results: H.W. Wilson's 400+ employees now have access to a state-of-the-art messaging services both in house and on the road. And, H.W. Wilson reported 100% uptime for the latest 30-day period monitored, as opposed to the 30-day period immediately prior to the migration where two major outages were reported.

BUSINESS SITUATION

Founded in 1898 and located in the Bronx since 1917, H. W. Wilson is a leading publisher of reference materials and databases primarily for the library market. Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, introduced in 1901, quickly became a classic in the field and continues to be a primary reference tool today. The company's other indexing and abstracting publications and reference materials are relied on worldwide.

Considering the nature of its business, H. W. Wilson obviously places a premium on effective communications and messaging technology. As such, H. W. Wilson began exploring the benefits of investing in a Microsoft Exchange Server 2003 migration to improve its internal and external messaging capabilities.

The publisher had an existing Exchange Server 2000 environment that previously met its messaging needs. However, as the company's needs changed, its existing architecture could no longer provide the functionality and reliability it required. Additionally, H.W. Wilson's IT professionals were especially interested in several new features introduced with Exchange 2003, including enhanced functionality for Outlook Web Access, improved security and stability, and RPC over HTTP.

Therefore, H.W. Wilson approached Microsoft to explore a migration project. As a Gold Certified "Go To" Partner possessing Microsoft's official Information Worker Solutions Competency with a proven track record for Exchange migrations, THG was a natural fit for this engagement.

SOLUTION

Exchange Server 2003 is the latest version of Microsoft's industry-leading communications server. Exchange Server 2003 provides many new features and enhancements to improve reliability, manageability, and security. For an organization such as H.W. Wilson with sophisticated messaging needs, Exchange Server 2003 offered the benefits of achieving the service levels and capabilities demanded by end users, while helping it reduce its TCO through areas such as server and site consolidation.

Although this new version of Exchange runs on Microsoft Windows 2000 Server, which was the platform H.W. Wilson had in place at the time, THG proposed to simultaneously upgrade the client's environment to Windows Server 2003. This included the pre-requisite configuration of the Active Directory service in Windows 2003. Windows provides Active Directory, upon which Exchange depends for user information, mail routing information, user authentication, and LDAP read and write functions.



THG also envisioned a solution that would leverage Exchange 2003's advances in administration, security, scalability, reliability, and built-in support for mobile computing that both lower the costs of managing an Exchange-based communications infrastructure and make it easier to deliver mission-critical messaging services.

RESULTS

THG achieved all of H.W. Wilson's objectives by architecting and managing an Exchange Server 2003 Cluster migration that included a complicated Windows 2003 migration/Active Directory configuration.

Exchange Server 2003 provides better support for the clustering architecture H.W. Wilson sought, which enables high availability of a company's infrastructure. Windows 2003 Server clusters have enhanced failover logic when there has been a complete loss of communication and the network state of all nodes is now considered prior to a failover taking place.

The improved Distributed File System (DFS) now includes: multiple standalone roots, independent root failover, support for active/active configurations, and allows multiple file shares on different machines to be aggregated into a common namespace.

Clustering Services has been optimized for storage area networks (SAN), such as the Dell storage array used by HW Wilson. Server clusters take advantage of important operational capabilities. Rolling upgrades with the Windows Server 2003 family ensure minimum downtime because only one node in a cluster has to be taken offline for upgrading. The cluster service account password can be changed dynamically without having to take cluster nodes offline.

H.W. Wilson's 400+ employees now have access to a state-of-the-art messaging services both in house and on the road. Those who have upgraded to Microsoft Outlook 2003 are now able to leverage the "RPC over HTTP" functionality that enables them to achieve remote access to messaging services without the requirement of Virtual Private Network. This was crucial component of the project, as a large number of the publisher's mobile user depend on email as a mission-critical application and often do not have access to a VPN.

IIS 6.0 and Windows RPC Proxy service in Windows Server 2003 enable communication between H.W. Wilson's Outlook 2003 and Exchange Server 2003 by means of HTTP. The client's Outlook 2003 users can synchronize directly with the server running Exchange Server 2003 over a HTTP or HTTPS connection.

In terms of reliability, H.W. Wilson now has a robust messaging environment that not only meets current needs, but will accommodate growth moving forward. For instance, H.W. Wilson reported 100% uptime for the latest 30-day period monitored, as opposed to the 30-day period immediately prior to the migration where two major outages were reported. And, as Exchange 2003 writes to the Volume Shadow Copy service on Windows Server 2003, H.W. Wilson now enjoys dramatically reduced backup and restore times for its Exchange messaging environments. This also enables IT departments to support greater numbers of users per server and reduces the total number of servers running Exchange in their environment.

About The Henson Group

Founded: June, 2000

Headquarters: New York City

Consultants: 37 (including both full-time and part-time professionals)

Partners: MS, HP, IBM, Cisco, Avicode, Dell, EMC, eXc Software, K2.net, Netscaler, Network Engines

Certifications: Microsoft Gold Certified and Cisco Certified

Official Microsoft Competencies:
Advanced Infrastructure Solutions
Information Worker Solutions
Integrated E-Business Solutions
Learning Solutions
Networking Infrastructure Solutions

History: Founded by former Microsoft employees from the development teams in Redmond and Microsoft Consulting Services

Consultants: All MS Certified, most former Microsoft engineers, and each have a minimum of three years of vertical-specific experience

Annual Client-Retention Rate:
(2000 through 2004) 98%

Annual Client-base Growth:
(2000 through 2004) 50%

Company Description: THG is an award-winning Microsoft Gold Certified Partner specializing in deploying Microsoft technologies for U.S. and international companies across 20 industry categories.

Founded by former Microsoft employees from the development groups in Redmond and Microsoft Consulting Services, THG offers clients direct access to Microsoft's product groups and technical information often not publicly available.

THG's competencies include .NET application development, infrastructure deployments, Line-Of-Business solutions, security, product training, and strategic consulting.

Delivering projects in a fraction of the time it takes competitors, THG's proprietary project management process and attention to detail consistently produces a 98% client-retention rate.

Everywhere clients need THG to be, the consultancy has operations, engineers, and partners located in countries around the world that are committed to the highest level of client satisfaction.

To learn more about THG, please visit www.HensonGroup.com. For more information on how THG can deploy this type of solution in your environment, please call 800.980.1130 or e-mail Info@HensonGroup.com.