

Perfect record as SolarWinds helps to streamline Fred. Olsen's network

The Fred. Olsen Group's far-reaching divisions encompass renewable energy, shipping, offshore drilling, travel and more. Its diverse activities all rely on a network that has achieved a perfect record since SolarWinds' Network Performance Monitor (NPM) was implemented. NPM's automated functionality has allowed network administrators to be pro-active, rather than reactive, in spotting and fixing potential glitches, hence the new stability. NPM has also cut two hours a day from the time spent monitoring the network; multiple tools were previously used to monitor the same service, creating an administrative overhead that was not needed.

The Customer

Fred. Olsen was established in 1848, when three Norwegian brothers began an international shipping business, and is now in its fifth generation of the Olsen family. Its far-reaching divisions encompass renewable energy, shipping, offshore drilling, travel and more. Fred Olsen-related companies cover energy and related activities, including shipping, floating production, offshore drilling and renewable energy, as well as cruise, media, real estate and venture capital.

The Challenge

In recent years, Fred. Olsen has steadily grown its operation and added new demands to the network, administered from the Head Office in Ipswich. At times, life was challenging for IT Manager Andrew Ericsson and his team, as they came under pressure to integrate disparate systems. They were using two or three different monitoring products to track network activities, but this software was not being upgraded and the results were unsatisfactory.

Ericsson said: "As we have introduced new systems and services, the complexity of the network grew larger and more cumbersome to manage/monitor. The group handles 30,000 emails each day and we cannot afford to have servers go down, as people are unable to work and become extremely frustrated."

Solution

Today, Fred. Olsen has a number of sites linked to its Ipswich headquarters. The company uses multiple Internet communications technologies, linked to a Juniper back end. The network has been streamlined over the past two years – a marked

FRED. OLSEN GROUP AT A GLANCE

- Five separate companies
- Retail shops
- Four cruise ships
- Two hours' work saved each day

Network Performance Monitor (NPM) makes it easy to quickly detect, diagnose and resolve performance issues and delivers real-time views and dashboards that enable users to track network performance at a glance.

"Since it was implemented, NPM has maintained a perfect record. We get to identify potential problems and alert colleagues across the business before they know what's happening. Also, because NPM automates system-checking, it saves us time: we spend maybe two hours less every morning checking all the systems for errors."

- Andrew Ericsson, IT Manager, Fred. Olsen Group

improvement over the former set-up in which the company's own services were bolted on to other systems.

As part of the improvement process, the company sought a single, effective network monitoring solution to cover the company's services, LAN, WAN, critical servers retail shops.

"SolarWinds NPM was recommended to us by a vendor, although we reviewed and tested others, which proved to be too complicated," said Ericsson. "We already used DameWare Remote Administration software, so we decided to trial NPM for a couple of weeks. We were pleased with the outcome and decided to implement the solution."

Results

According to Ericsson, to date, NPM has achieved a perfect record in helping to streamline, then report on and monitor, the far-flung network.

He said: "It means we are pro-active instead of reactive and can predict what's going to happen in the next 10 minutes or so. NPM alerts allow us to get in first and deal with issues before the customers become aware of them. Since our network forms the company's backbone, it's very important that users no longer even think about what's happening in the background."

Ericsson adds: "Since it was implemented, NPM has maintained a perfect record. We get to identify potential problems and alert colleagues across the business before they know what's happening. Also, because NPM automates system-checking, it saves us time: we spend maybe two hours less every morning checking all the systems for errors."

He regards this as a valuable return on investment, since this automation allows network administrators to focus on more pressing work. His team also find NPM simple to use and support.

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