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Siemens embarks on 350,000-user Exchange 2003 migration

It turned to Quest Software for help with the massive implementation

NEWS STORY BY TODD R. WEISS

SEPTEMBER 22, 2004 (COMPUTERWORLD) - Siemens AG has embarked on a massive plan to migrate 350,000 users in more than 100 diverse business units around the world from Microsoft Exchange Version 5.5 to Exchange 2003.

The migration, which isn't due to be complete until the fall of 2005, prompted the Munich-based company to turn to Irvine, Calif.-based Quest Software Inc. for help. Siemens is a conglomerate whose divisions produce and sell lighting products, railroad cars, sensors and power generation systems.

The Siemens Exchange network was built, division by division, with little worry about centralized administration, and was set up using more than 150 Exchange "organizations" for the business units when it was last updated in the late 1990s. Even worse, by having those separate organizations, Siemens couldn't take full advantage of its recent investment in Microsoft's Active Directory. That software allows users to share calendars, address books and public folders across the entire corporate network -- as long as the users are all located within the same organization.

Dieter Reinersmann, a Siemens IT administrator responsible for the company's Exchange deployment, said Siemens managers eventually turned to Aelita Exchange Migration Wizard from Quest to help solve the most serious issues with the Exchange migration.

The Exchange Migration Wizard allows Siemens IT workers to maintain their old Exchange 5.5 records and mailboxes even as they create the new system under Exchange 2003. That means users can continue to get their mail and use their address books, even as the transfers are being done, he said. No systems shutdown is needed. Because it allows the new Exchange server to be deployed without any disruption

to Siemens' employees, "they don't even really know what's happening," Reinersmann said.

"There's no way we could develop this on our own," he said. "You have to have an in-depth knowledge of Exchange."

Quest acquired the migration wizard in March when it bought Aelita Software for about \$115 million. The Aelita name is being dropped by the end of this year, when the product will be known as Exchange Migration Wizard.

Siemens is using the migration wizard to convert about 200,000 of its Exchange users in its largest business units, while using some of the native Exchange migration tools in smaller business units, he said. The native Exchange migration tools didn't have the capabilities needed across the entire company because they couldn't handle the disparate Exchange organizations already in place, he said.

As part of the migration, Siemens expects to save money by reducing the number of Exchange organizations and paring its existing 2,500 Exchange servers to about 700. "That's a big cost savings," Reinersmann said.

Siemens spent a year testing the Exchange Migration Wizard, then began using it for the migration about six months ago. The price of the migration wasn't disclosed, but Reinersmann said Exchange Migration Wizard has already paid for itself.

He also offered advice for other companies contemplating a similar move. "If you're planning something like this, be prepared to take some time" to get it worked out, he said. "If it is prepared carefully, the tool works well."

Pricing for the wizard begins at \$15 per mailbox, with discounts for volume purchases.

