



BON SECOURS HEALTH SYSTEM, INC.

Overview

Country or Region: United States

Industry: Healthcare

Customer Profile

Bon Secours Health System, based in Marriottsville, Maryland, is a not-for-profit Catholic health system with facilities in nine states. Bon Secours employs more than 20,000 caregivers.

Business Situation

To reduce costs and simplify administration, Bon Secours wanted to merge its mixed-environment local systems into a unified network.

Solution

Bon Secours worked with Microsoft partner Quest Software to migrate from Novell Netware to the Microsoft® Windows Server System™ with the Active Directory® service.

Benefits

- Increased stability
- Easier administration
- Stronger security
- Robust software platform
- Greater access to resources

Healthcare Ministry Merges Isolated Systems into Unified Network

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Jeff Pearson, Director of Information Services Architecture, Bon Secours

Bon Secours Health System is a not-for-profit Catholic health system based in Marriottsville, Maryland. It consists of more than 20,000 caregivers helping people in 12 communities in nine states. These local systems ran independent, unconnected networks using a mix of Novell Netware and the Microsoft® Windows NT® Server 4.0 operating system. When Bon Secours began installing software that employees used in multiple local systems, it saw the advantages of migrating to a single software platform and centralizing its IT functions. Bon Secours worked with Microsoft Gold Certified Partner Quest Software to migrate its server computers to the Microsoft Windows Server System™ with the Active Directory® service. As a result, the company simplified IT management, created a more stable and secure network, and increased employee productivity through better access to network resources.



Situation

Bon Secours Health System was formed in 1983 by the Sisters of Bon Secours, an international Catholic congregation devoted to the care of the poor and sick. The company was created to provide skilled, unified management and professional resources for all Bon Secours healthcare operations.

Bon Secours is divided into regional markets, called "local systems," containing from one to four hospitals. Historically IT staff at the local systems managed their networks independently of the others. Roughly 70 percent of the server computers at these local systems ran different versions of the Novell Netware operating system. The remainder ran the Microsoft® Windows NT™ Server 4.0 operating system. Network administrators used Novell Directory Services (NDS) to manage the Netware servers. Two local systems used NDS for NT to synchronize NDS with Windows NT Server 4.0. Some employees at the local systems used applications running on Lotus Notes.

There were disadvantages to this setup. Employees who traveled from one local system to another couldn't always access the resources they normally used to do their work. Administrators had to set up new accounts and file permissions for such users whenever they arrived. This sometimes required long discussions to determine which resources they would need, and frequently required adjusting as their needs became clearer over time. Some local systems had set up trust relationships between networks with other local systems, but these were done on a case-by-case basis and didn't reflect a larger, coherent plan for the overall architecture of the system. These ad hoc changes made it hard to ensure network security and to set companywide IT standards.

In 2003, Bon Secours began approaching its IT strategy from an enterprise perspective. Rather than install and run new applications at each local system, the organization would make them available centrally to all employees. Bon Secours initially did this with four applications: Financial and Material Management; Home Healthcare; Operating Room Management; and the company's messaging system, built on Microsoft Exchange Server version 5.5.

Its success with these installations convinced Bon Secours that it could become more efficient and productive by centralizing as many of its network management functions as possible in its Richmond enterprise data center, and standardizing its network access on a single network operating system. This new architecture would enable the local systems to share resources more effectively, help make employees more productive and mobile, and reduce the workload of IT staff.

Solution

Bon Secours chose to migrate its systems to the Microsoft Windows Server™ 2003 operating system, using the Active Directory® service to manage network resources. The company worked closely with consultants from Microsoft Services to determine how best to implement a new infrastructure based on Microsoft Windows Server System™ integrated server software, and to create an architecture that served its needs.

The company began its planning phase in February 2003. Jeff Pearson, Director of Information Services Architecture at Bon Secours, says, "We wanted this migration to be as automated as possible, but we were moving a very disparate set of user names and accounts to a single domain. There were a lot of factors to consider in order to make the move a success."

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James Tarala, project manager for the Active Directory implementation at Bon Secours

The company’s contact at Microsoft Services recommended Microsoft Gold Certified Partner Quest Software to help with the project. Quest—named Microsoft Global Independent Software Vendor (ISV) Partner of the year in 2004—offers a mature set of IT management, migration, and integration products. Bon Secours was impressed with the ISV’s NDS migration software and its experience with migrations of this type.

The automation provided by Quest NDS Migrator saved Bon Secours significant amounts of time during the project. James Tarala, project manager for the Active Directory implementation at Bon Secours, says, “When we’ve had to configure the computers manually, three or four technicians could migrate maybe 20 or 30 computers a day. Using the Quest migration software, they can migrate around 100 a day.”

Will Brown, Senior Account Executive at Quest, says, “Bon Secours needed to not only move 16,000 user accounts from NDS to Active Directory, but also move all of its files and folders from the Novell servers to Windows Server 2003. Moving and updating the permissions on those files is a big job, and the people at Bon Secours really appreciated that our products could automate that process.”

Quest NDS Migrator helps ensure a low-impact migration by automating computer updates so that profiles, mapped drives, desktop shortcuts, and server-side OLE object links continue to function during and after the migration. It also provides clean-up options such as removal of the Novell software client, so that administrators don’t have to visit each workstation to perform the migration, and users need no assistance from help desk staff.

Microsoft Services coordinated with Microsoft Learning partners to train Bon Secours system administrators in April 2003. The project’s design phase began in June, and the company’s new single-forest, single-domain architecture was finalized in November. In April 2004, Bon Secours ran its first pilot program, followed by a full rollout of the new environment, at its local system in Florida. The successful rollout in Florida led to a series of trouble-free migrations at the other local systems.

By September 2005, Bon Secours had migrated all of its workstations and most of its servers to the new environment. The company’s IT staff continues to move servers and applications and is also preparing to upgrade Exchange Server 5.5 to the Microsoft Exchange Server 2003 communication and collaboration server.

Benefits

Bon Secours has achieved a unified, integrated enterprise network by installing the Windows Server System and Active Directory. The new architecture is more stable, easier for IT staff to administer, provides better security and access to needed resources, and paves the way for new applications to help make users more efficient and productive.

Increased Stability

Bon Secours reports that the biggest benefit it’s seen has been the increased stability of its network environment. “I’ve been very, very impressed with how resilient Windows Server System and Active Directory are,” says Pearson. “Since we deployed the new systems, we’ve had zero downtime, period.”

Ease of Administration

System administrators at Bon Secours find the Active Directory environment much easier to manage than the old systems. They were able to quickly understand the new

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Jeff Pearson, Director of Information Services Architecture, Bon Secours

technology and administrative tools, making the transition from NDS to Active Directory a smooth one. Because the new system is more stable and easier to manage, less time and money have been spent maintaining the company’s IT infrastructure.

Stronger Security

Migrating to a single-forest Active Directory structure has enabled Bon Secours to manage its security policies and IT standards more effectively, leading to a more secure network. Tarala says, “We definitely have increased levels of security now and are able to be more consistent in managing changes to our network than we were before.”

Because employees access many of the company’s network resources through a single account in Active Directory rather than separate user accounts on different systems, it’s easier for system administrators to protect sensitive data. When employees move to a different department or leave the company, administrators can quickly modify their user accounts to change their permissions to network resources that are accessed through many different network entry points: wired, wireless, VPN, and intranet.

Robust Software Platform

The Windows Server System migration has opened up possibilities for deploying new software and features that were not available to Bon Secours before. To begin with, Bon Secours plans to deploy Exchange Server 2003 early in 2006 in order to take advantage of the full functionality of the Microsoft Office Outlook® 2003 messaging and collaboration client and an improved Microsoft Office Outlook Web Access.

Greater Access to Resources

The new environment increases the ability of Bon Secours employees to move from one local system to another, either permanently

or temporarily. Rather than moving a user’s account or creating a new one, administrators can leave it in place on Active Directory and modify its permissions using templates based on the user’s role within the company.

Pearson says, “There was a lot of potential for confusion before. For example, someone from Michigan might need access to a resource on a network in Virginia. If that had never been done before, we would have to figure out whether we should set up a trust between the two domains, or set up a separate account for that user, or find some other solution. Active Directory makes that very simple and straightforward.”

He adds, “Active Directory reduces the number of user names and passwords people need. In the future, we’ll be implementing products that use Active Directory authentication whenever possible.”

For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400. In Canada, call the Microsoft Canada Information Centre at (877) 568-2495. Customers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can reach Microsoft text telephone (TTY/TDD) services at (800) 892-5234 in the United States or (905) 568-9641 in Canada. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact your local Microsoft subsidiary. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to: www.microsoft.com

For more information about Quest Software products and services, call (800) 263-0036 or visit the Web site at: www.quest.com

For more information about Bon Secours Health System products and services, call (410) 442-5511 or visit the Web site at: www.bshsi.com

Microsoft Windows Server System

Microsoft Windows Server System is a line of integrated and manageable server software designed to reduce the complexity and cost of IT. Windows Server System enables you to spend less time and budget on managing your systems so that you can focus your resources on other priorities for you and your business.

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- Technologies
 - Microsoft Active Directory
 - Microsoft Office Outlook Web Access

Hardware

- HP ProLiant DL360 G3 servers

Partners

- Quest Software

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