

MSP MEDIEN SYSTEMPARTNER



IP NETWORKS

Brocade Helps German Publisher Meet Deadlines During Network Migration

Objective

- Migrate ATM and Ethernet networks to Gigabit Ethernet
- Maintain all publishing and production processes for two daily newspapers during migration

Solution

- Two FastIron 1500 devices in Bremen, two FastIron 400 switches in Oldenburg, and 44 FastIron edge switches (FES models 2402, 4802, 9604) for building interconnection

Results

- MSP will realize return on investment in less than five years
- Brocade solutions have increased network efficiency
- Network maintenance costs have been reduced substantially
- MSP deployed the Brocade network quickly and seamlessly, with no service interruption
- Fail-safe network guarantees uninterrupted production for the daily newspapers

MSP Medien SystemPartner, an IT service provider owned by newspaper publishers Bremer Tageszeitungen and the Northwest Zeitung Oldenburg in Northern Germany, supports its corporate IT needs and offers IT services to unaffiliated businesses.

OBJECTIVE

When the Bremer Tageszeitungen and the Northwest Zeitung Oldenburg newspaper companies merged, MSP was tasked with replacing the aging, heterogeneous network shared by its owners and consolidating company resources. MSP patched together the outdated networks—one in Bremen and the other in Oldenburg—but it was a temporary fix.

“A number of the installed switches were out of date,” says Sven Schulze, who handles server and network environments at MSP.

“Some systems had even been withdrawn from the market and were no longer supported by their manufacturers, making it really expensive and time-consuming for us to maintain all the different components. On top of that, the older switches didn’t support Gigabit Ethernet ports, and we urgently needed those to be able to connect our servers.”

MSP decided to create a single, high-availability Gigabit Ethernet network for the newspaper publisher. Because the daily newspapers must meet their ongoing publication deadlines, MSP needed to maintain all production processes while deploying the new network, and the migration had to be swift and smooth.

SOLUTION

After researching different options, MSP chose networking solutions from Brocade®. “Our team really put the products through their paces for four weeks,” says Hans-Wolfgang Gertz, manager of MSP’s servers and networks department.

MSP deployed two FastIron® 1500 backbone switches in Bremen, interconnected with a 4-1 Gb/s trunk. The Oldenburg site has a corresponding system with two FastIron 400 devices. Each of the two systems monitors the other using the standardized Virtual Redundant Router Protocol Enhanced (VRRP-E).

Inside the buildings, the individual floors and departments are equipped with 44 FastIron 2402, 4802, and 9604 edge switches that supply a total of 2,472 client connections. The switches are linked to the backbone via redundant Gigabit Ethernet tracks. Open Shortest Path First (OSPF) enables dynamic routing, efficient load balancing on all available pathways, and rapid route failover in the event of a fault.

For the Bremen site, the MSP team spent eight days in January 2005 replacing the old network system with the new one and reconfiguring the existing Ethernet structure. The Oldenburg site was trickier. “In Oldenburg there was an ATM backbone with IP, IPX, and AppleTalk communications protocols tunneled through it,” says Schulze. “Each port had to be assigned individually and new IP segments defined for the AppleTalk devices, among others. Then we had to set up IPX routing and establish a variety of VLANs.”

RESULTS

The network came online in April 2005 and has been running smoothly since deployment. MSP was able to implement the Brocade gear in a quick and seamless fashion. The Bremen migration took only eight nights; the Oldenburg transition occurred over the Easter holiday weekend with a team of seven MSP technicians. Neither newspaper office lost data or production time when the new network went live. Scheduled network outages have verified the redundant systems operate as expected, allowing no disruption in service.

Through Pan Dacom, a Brocade PSA Service Partner, MSP enjoys enhanced support for troubleshooting queries and other benefits related to hardware and software maintenance. This relationship helps MSP keep maintenance costs at a minimum.

“Brocade offered us such good warranty conditions that we are doing without a maintenance agreement and prefer to use the expertise we have here within the company,” Gertz says.

This reduction in costs plus an increase in productivity is helping MSP realize a dramatic return on investment for the new, high-end, gigabit Ethernet network.

“We’re making big efficiency gains with the new network solution and, compared with the previous network, we’re saving so much in maintenance fees that the total cost of about 450,000 euros (about \$567,000 U.S.) for the components and labor will have paid itself off in as little as five years,” Gertz says.

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