Warwick District Council Improves Management of Complex Application Environment with Foglight®

In order to comply with the UK's e-Government initiative and the council's own customer service agenda, Warwick District Council (WDC) is requiring all Council departments to deliver their services electronically by 2005. With the implementation of Quest's Foglight for application monitoring, WDC has ensured the performance, availability and manageability of the Council's new online systems.

The Challenge

Like all local Councils, WDC provides many different services to its consumers, the general public. Historically, each of these services was managed as separate business units, which sometimes made communication between different departments and systems challenging. However, with services available only Monday to Friday, from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m., there was always time to correct any IT issues. Ty Walter, Systems Development Manager in the IT department at WDC explained, "I always knew that I had two days at the end of each week for maintenance work, should there be a problem."

Over the last six years WDC has seen an increase from just one application server to thirty, and with the e-Government initiative designed to achieve 24x7 availability of information and services to the consumer, the opportunity for "out of hours" maintenance is disappearing.

WDC realised that it needed to implement a customer contact centre to streamline interaction with its customers. Before the contact centre's existence, a council resident had to call several different numbers for different services. Moreover, with numerous ad-hoc calls handled by members of each individual department, the department staff were less free to focus on their many other tasks. To provide the operators at its new customer contact centre with a single interface for dealing with the many different service requests, WDC implemented Siebel's e-Service application.

With the implementation of the customer contact centre (open from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. Monday to Friday) and the 24x7 requirements of the e-Government initiative, Walter was no longer able to take his systems down during off peak hours for maintenance. "I lost any windows of opportunity to take the systems down for maintenance," explained Walter. "So we needed a monitoring solution that would enable us to be proactive in managing our systems, in order to reduce planned and unplanned downtime."

The Quest Solution

After a detailed evaluation, WDC chose Foglight, Quest's Siebel-certified application monitor, to monitor the entire IT infrastructure. With Foglight, Walter was able to proactively detect potential problems early on and schedule his department's time more effectively by prioritising the work that needed to be done. "Before Foglight, we didn't know what the problems would be until they happened and even then identifying them could be very difficult" explained Walter. "With so many back-office systems, that can have a knock-on effect. Now we can see if we are going to have problems before they happen and proactively fix them so that the users don't even notice that there was a problem."

Foglight monitors not just the servers but the applications as well, enabling WDC to know exactly what is going on in each part of the environment at any given time. The Siebel application acts as a front office interface to their back office, department specific systems.

If Siebel or any of the back office applications were to grind to a halt, the contact centre staff would not be able to deal with the instant barrage of enquiries. "Foglight gave us the confidence to make our infrastructure as robust as possible for a minimum level of investment," explained Walter.

Overview

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- Ty Walter,
  Systems Development Manager,
  Warwick District Council

Headquarters

Royal Leamington Spa, UK

Services

Local government agency

Critical Needs

Solution to ensure the performance, availability and manageability of new online systems

Solution

Foglight

Results

• Assisted in meeting e-Government objectives

• Supported future delivery of 24x7 services

• Ensured optimal application performance and availability

• Enabled more efficient use of IT staff

The Bottom Line

Since the implementation of Foglight as a core component of their strategy, WDC has experienced the levels of performance and availability they needed to achieve their e-Government objectives. "Since we are in the public sector, our focus on service is quite different from the private sector," explained Walter. "To some extent we have a captive audience. However, at WDC we consider it our responsibility to deliver the highest levels of service possible. What Foglight delivers is the ability to manage that service. No nasty surprises, just the confidence to let us get on with our jobs."

About Warwick District Council

Warwick District Council came into being following the re-organisation of local government in 1974, when it replaced the former Kenilworth Urban District Council, Royal Leamington Spa, Warwick Borough Councils and Warwick Rural District Council. The majority of Council services are provided by six business units: Council Tax, Environmental Health, Finance, Housing, Leisure and Amenities, and Planning and Engineering. The Chief Executive's Office consists of six sections; Corporate Personnel, Information and Communication Technology Services, Legal Services, Members' and Customer Services, Policy Services and Property Services.

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