



Idea Integration helps Law Firm Improve IT Operations and Overall Visibility

Overview

Country or Region: United States

Industry: Law

Customer Profile

Andrews Kurth LLP provides legal services for clients around the world. Based in Houston, Texas, the firm has nearly 1000 employees in 8 locations throughout the U.S. and England.

Business Situation

The Andrews Kurth LLP Network Operations Team keeps striving to be more than the typical IT support group. Knowing that their best work is prevention rather than remediation, they required a solution that would identify and isolate potential IT issues before they affected production.

Solution

Partnering with Idea Integration and Microsoft®, Andrews Kurth LLP implemented Microsoft® Operations Manager to help the firm identify and respond to issues quickly and effectively.

Benefits

- Proactive monitoring solution
- Reduces downtime with alerts
- Improves issue resolution with built-in Microsoft® knowledge base
- Corporate knowledge base for other third-party applications
- Simplifies management and automation
- Identifies bottlenecks

“We want to know about an issue before it becomes a problem – being proactive is a prerequisite for being successful.”

Todd Coury, Network Manager, Andrews Kurth LLP

Andrews Kurth LLP is a highly successful law firm with twelve people in the Network Operations Team supporting nearly 1,000 users in eight offices nationwide and in the U.K. The Network Team knows that their best bet for success is prevention as apposed to remediation, and they strive to be more than the typical IT Team. They required a robust solution that would proactively monitor server health, alert the IT staff to issues before they caused problems, and improve overall efficiency of services, in turn improving overall satisfaction for our users.

Idea Integration partnered with Microsoft® to deploy Microsoft® Operations Manager (MOM). Andrews Kurth uses MOM to manage their Microsoft® Infrastructure and third-party applications. The firm can now verify that Exchange is optimally functioning and can identify bottlenecks or performance problems ahead of time. Using MOM, Andrews Kurth reduces downtime, improves overall services efficiency, and proactively provides better service to their user community and clients.

“We needed a way to centrally monitor our third-party applications – such as iManage and Research in Motion’s Blackberry.”

Ray Duskocil, Network Operations Lead,
Andrews Kurth LLP

“We have over a terabyte of e-mail for our Houston users alone and with many users having mailboxes in excess of several gigabyte – we needed a tool to help us manage and plan for the future in this type of environment.”

Ray Duskocil, Network Operations Lead,

Situation

Based in Houston, Texas, Andrews Kurth LLP is among the top law firms in the country. Founded in 1902, Andrews Kurth has grown to nearly 1000 employees. Their decentralized IT operations are dispersed between the main office of Houston with support offices in The Woodlands, Austin, Dallas, New York, Los Angeles, Washington D.C. and London.

While the Network Operations Team carefully monitored critical systems to guard against any major network problems, they wanted to extend their preventative maintenance to all key systems, and monitor them in one central location. The Team pushes to find the earliest possible signs of trouble so they can turn reactive fixes into proactive enhancements. Ray Duskocil, Network Operations Lead for Andrews Kurth, said “Fighting fires makes it difficult for any IT department to focus on day to day operations.”

The nature of the business at Andrews Kurth is such that, users have Exchange mailboxes in excess of several gigabytes. This amount of activity required a solution that monitors Exchange, mailbox statistics, usage, and performance statistics, and sends alerts to the Team. Moreover, there are numerous third-party applications and services that required advance monitoring, including Active Directory, Exchange 2000, SQL 2000, iManage, and Research in Motion’s Blackberry Server.

In addition to a proactive monitoring and alert system, the Network Operations Team needed the facility to create reports from the monitoring data so they could analyze trends and manage operations more effectively over time.

Solution

Idea Integration assisted Andrews Kurth select a natural fit product—Microsoft®

Operations Manager. Microsoft® Operations Manager provided a Windows-centric solution perfect for their infrastructure with extended capabilities through management packs and plug-ins that can monitor third-party applications.

Andrews Kurth now uses MOM to monitor their Active Directory, DNS, DHCP, FRS, Exchange —important Windows services and applications. Other monitored systems and services include data backup, iManage-Document Management System, Blackberry, etc.

MOM continuously collects events and performance data from monitored computers using the agents installed on those computers. Predefined rules trigger alerts about potential problems. MOM then routes alerts to a central console and sends them in e-mail messages to the Andrews Kurth Network Operations group. SQL Server 2000 stores the data, which can be used for reporting and analysis.

Idea Integration configured a variety of MOM management packs for Andrews Kurth to use, that provide in-depth operational knowledge about specific applications and services. Microsoft® product teams developed the management packs, which include the Active Directory Management Pack and the SQL Server Management Pack. Incorporating the product teams’ expertise, the management packs contain rules for identifying issues and creating alerts. They also include Microsoft® Knowledge Base articles that provide guidance for resolving alerts and predefined reports to help with trend analysis.

Benefits

With Idea Integration’s expertise and Microsoft® Operations Manager, Andrews Kurth expects to increase coverage into its computing infrastructure so that it can increase efficiency, improve response time and operational efficiency.



Real Solutions. Real-e.

When you work with Idea Integration professionals—whether it's one person or an entire team selected from our nationwide organization—you also have the collective resources and commitment of MPS Group, a billion-dollar international services firm. At Idea, we judge our success by our high number of repeat customers. We execute. And we deliver on our promises. Just ask our clients.

For more information about Andrews Kurth LLP,

Andrews Kurth LLP can be found at the following Web site at:

<http://www.andrewskurth.com>

For more information about Idea Integration, visit www.idea.com or for IT Infrastructure & Security Services, call 713.626.5242 or email us at InfraSolutions@idea.com.



Fortifying Uptime

With Idea Integration's assistance, Andrews Kurth expects to fortify the uptime and performance of its business applications, and therefore improve the productivity of the employees who use those applications. With Idea's efforts, Andrews Kurth can now monitor third-party applications critical to their business-computing environment. MOM provides assistance and indicators to warn the Network Operation group regarding core services.

Improving Operational Efficiency

Microsoft® Operations Manager helps Andrews Kurth increase IT responsiveness and simplify IT management. Here, the goal is to maximize resources and decrease labor costs across the entire IT life cycle.

With MOM, Andrews Kurth expects to be better prepared to identify, understand, and resolve IT issues before they become serious problems. The application Knowledge Base built into the management packs is designed to help businesses like Andrews Kurth diagnose issues. MOM also works with third-party application and hardware management packs. Idea Integration has built custom management packs for Andrews Kurth, in order to manage and monitor their iManage and Blackberry services.

MOM helps to simplify operations management by automatically generating alerts and highlighting issues that require immediate attention. MOM also consolidates related events into a single alert. In addition, MOM saves IT management time

by providing automated responses to alerts. Custom scripts can also be written to provide specific actions for custom-based applications.

By spending less time on IT problems, the company's Network Operation Team will be able to devote more resources to implementing new services that can promote business growth.

Improving Decision Making

Microsoft® Operations Manager provides in depth reports on critical services and applications enabling history analysis, trending, and pattern analysis. MOM provides the tool to simplify the gathering and maintenance process.

Software and Services

- Microsoft® Windows Server System
 - Microsoft® Windows Server 2003
 - Microsoft® Operations Manager 2000
 - Microsoft® SQL Server 2000
- Technologies
 - Active Directory
 - Internet Information Services (IIS) 6.0

Hardware

- Dell/EMC SAN
- Dell Power Edge servers