

Case Study



Ultra Electronics PMES migrate to Microsoft in order to meet increasing business demands

“ANS Groups consultants did a superb job of preparing the servers and performing the data migration, which went through flawlessly. Thanks to their skills the project went through on time and to cost. More importantly the business did not notice the renewal and expansion of its basic network infrastructure other than the couple of hours spent being shown how to use Exchange.”

Alan Wyatt, IT Manager, Ultra Electronics PMES

Company Background

Ultra Electronics PMES is a group of specialist businesses designing, manufacturing and supporting electronic and electromechanical systems, sub-systems and products for defense, security and aerospace applications worldwide. The company, established in 1946, became part of the Ultra Electronics Group in 1998. PMES is based in Rugeley, Staffordshire and designs and manufactures DC Power Supplies for the Transit market and Power Control equipment, Sensors and Magnetics product solutions for the Defence markets world-wide. It has over 160 IT users.

The Challenge

Ultra Electronics PMES was about to embark on a radical overhaul of its business applications and processes in order to address the challenges facing it. A rapid increase in order intake had occurred and customers were demanding shorter project delivery timescales. In order to meet these demands the business system needed replacing and multiple CAD systems would have to be consolidated into a single package.

The company ran its many applications on a reliable network infrastructure largely based on Novell products, NDS, NetWare and GroupWise, but with some NT4 and Windows 2000 application servers. However, this infrastructure also needed updating as the software versions were over five years old and data storage was spread across multiple servers each with their own back up devices.

Coincidentally, at this point key Novell support staff left the IT Department and due to the difficulty of recruiting staff with Novell skills the decision was taken that any update of the network would be with Microsoft products.

The challenge was to simplify the network infrastructure whilst updating it and providing the capability to support the growth and changes in the business. This new infrastructure had to be installed and commissioned with no downtime for the end users.

The Solution

ANS Group proposed to update the network by implementing Active Directory Services, Windows 2003 R2 Server and the latest version of Exchange, Exchange 2007. All of this would run on HP Proliant servers with

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the data stored on a HP SAN unit with a large capacity tape jukebox for back up. The SAN would simplify data storage and back up and make it easier to cope with the increase in storage requirements that would come with the changes in the business.

ANS Group supplied all the necessary server, storage hardware and software to replace the Novell software, together with the technical expertise to build the ADS, translate the GroupWise email data into Exchange format and to transfer all the data files from the File and Print servers onto the SAN.

The migration began by creating a replica of the backbone of the PMES network alongside the existing company network using the new servers and the SAN infrastructure. Over one weekend all of the network data was copied off the Novell servers and onto the SAN. Thorough preparatory work during the previous week had prepared all the networked PCs to access the Windows 2003 servers rather than the NetWare servers. Finally the existing NT4 and Windows 2000 servers were integrated into the ADS from the NT Domain structure. When the users came into work on Monday they were able to log onto the network and start working straight away. Over a second weekend all of the existing live and archived mailboxes were converted from GroupWise to Exchange 2007, again this went flawlessly and on the Monday users could access their email without problems.

PMES are also fully supported with a SysCare contract for the implemented products giving them 3rd level technical support for the new solution implementation.

Business Benefits

PMES now has a scalable infrastructure that can support rapid business growth and for which support staff can be readily found. Already the routine administration of the network is taking less time releasing IT staff to develop the network facilities rather than just having time to maintain them. As part of this, since the initial project a document management package and the new ERP system have been installed onto the network.



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