

CMP Information improves network control and management with ApplianSys DNSBOX

Challenge

With limited resources and experience to manage DNS, CMPi needed a solution that would improve their responsiveness when responding to internal requests for DNS changes

Solution

One **DNSBOX300** master
Two **DNSBOX100** dedicated slave appliances

Key Benefits

Better customer service – great improvement in the end user experience and support response times

Ease of use - Intuitive user interface allows staff to save time and eliminate errors when managing DNS

Security in-house – no longer dependent on ISP managed DNS, CMPi have greater confidence in their network architecture

CMP Information (CMPi) is a trade publication and exhibition company based in Blackfriars, London, and is the professional media division of United Business Media. CMPi employs over 900 staff across the UK, and in 2005 generated £177m of revenue.

The company provides creative media solutions such as magazines, exhibitions, websites and directories to around 15 different industry sectors, including building and construction, agriculture, pharmaceutical and travel.

Challenging times

With offices and staff spread across the country, CMPi has traditionally had a very dispersed Domain Name Server (DNS) hosting environment. Individual business units would set up websites for events and publications on an ad hoc basis, each time registering domain names with a range of ISPs without informing the IT department.

This meant that the three-strong Networks Team was experiencing problems with the number of DNS changes being pushed through. The main challenge was being able to control the speed of these changes.

The other problem was that a core company within the group that had been hosting a significant amount of the DNS was now pulling out.

Jonathan Guthrie, network manager at CMPi, explained: *“We realised that we either needed to host our own servers in Tonbridge or find someone else to do it for us. We decided to do it ourselves. When looking for a solution, we wanted to find something that would do the job without taking up our time, and that would also eliminate human error in the process. We knew that setting up, and looking after, DNS servers takes up a lot of time, and is particularly prone to error.”*

Plug and Play

It became apparent that the answer would be a device-based DNS platform. Having researched the market, Guthrie selected ApplianSys to provide the solution because of the capabilities of its leading DNS product, **DNSBOX** a robust appliance 'wrapper' around reliable market-leading software.

ApplianSys provided CMPi with one master **DNSBOX300** server and two **DNSBOX100** slave servers. The master is used to edit DNS records and holds the authoritative records.

As a dedicated DNS appliance, **DNSBOX300** is based around NameSurfer software, a proven DNS management solution from Nixu, a leading DNS software specialist. The appliance is secure and reliable and, as a plug-and-play device, saves time, money and stress.

DNSBOX300 has a purpose-built Linux secure appliance architecture and an inbuilt firewall. It has no hard disk, using CompactFlash instead to increase reliability and security.

“We didn't really have much DNS experience,” said Guthrie, *“and this drove us to using an appliance-based solution. And the **DNSBOX300** definitely makes our lives easier. It's robust, secure, easy to use and manage, and so makes our servers much easier to operate. It really is as simple as 'plug and play'.”*

DNSBOX300 comes pre-installed, with a simple user interface. There is no need to install any software, or to patch the software for security vulnerabilities. Software upgrades are taken care of, eliminating more hassle for the network managers.



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Efficient network management

Now, with the ApplianSys solution in place, Guthrie and his team receive an email notifying them when a new domain name is registered and requesting them to set up a zone file.

“Our speed of response has improved dramatically. Previously, if a business unit set up a website, we would have to spend a considerable amount of time looking into who had set the site up, who had authorised it, and for all we knew they may even have left the company since it was set up. It was very hard to trace back and very time consuming. Now we receive an internal email and that's it.”

All of CMPi's domain names now point to its **DNSBOX₃₀₀** rather than the ISPs, which means that changes are made live, straight away, and the company is responsible for them rather than the ISP.

The **DNSBOX₃₀₀** has saved the network manager's time, and has enabled CMPi to control and manage its networks more efficiently.



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