

Top marks for DNSBOX from London Business School

Challenge

- Networks housed across two locations, housing aging DNS/DHCP solution
- Time consuming maintenance due to command line management and home grown solution
- Help desk team dependent on infrastructure team to provision desktops across the School, causing delays

Solution

- 1 x **DNSBOX300** and 2 x **DNSBOX100** in each of the two locations
- 1 x **DNSBOX100** installed with the School's external hosting company to ensure redundancy
- ApplianSys consultants created the solution architecture, developed a migration plan, converted data from Solaris DHCP to ISC format and migrated zone for the School

Key Benefits

- Each building is now self sustaining with further protection off site
 - An audit trail ensures rollback in the event of problems thanks to **DNSBOX's** unlimited undo facility
 - Rollouts are faster and more effective, with the help desk team empowered to provision desktops
 - Errors eliminated due to built in error checking and validation
 - Cost effective solution resulting in increased up time and more efficient IS teams
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London Business School is a graduate school of the University of London, a world-class international business school recognised for its research and teaching excellence. It was one of only two business schools in the UK to be awarded a six star (6*) rating by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), and is consistently ranked in the top five business schools in the world.

The School offers both standard taught programmes and corporate educational programmes, offering courses tailor made for clients such as BT. At any one moment, there are 1,400 students on campus, it turns over 6,000 corporate education students in any one year, and has 27,000 alumni, all of whom still have access to network resources. It was founded in 1965 under Royal Charter and has 300 staff.

Help for the help desk

The School's network was becoming increasingly hard to manage and maintain. Its internal DNS/DHCP was home grown, based on old UNIX boxes provisioned and managed from a command line instead of having an intuitive user interface. It was highly prone to human error when systems were being changed, leading to systems crashing and disrupting access to the network for students and staff.

Richard Thomson, network and telecoms manager, London Business School, explained: "The set up of our network held up the whole IT department. Each time a new PC arrived on campus, the help desk team had to wait for the infrastructure team to put the new PC's MAC address into the DHCP system. It made the whole process of provisioning a new PC much slower than it needed to be."

The School needed to find a way for the larger help desk team to be able to manage the roll out of the desktops around the campus, allowing the infrastructure team to focus on the constant demands it was facing on a daily basis. However they also had to be sure that the help desk would be able to take on this extra load without any human errors bringing the network to a standstill.

The School considered solutions from both ApplianSys and Lucent QIP. The ApplianSys solution won out, as it was both streamlined and more cost effective.

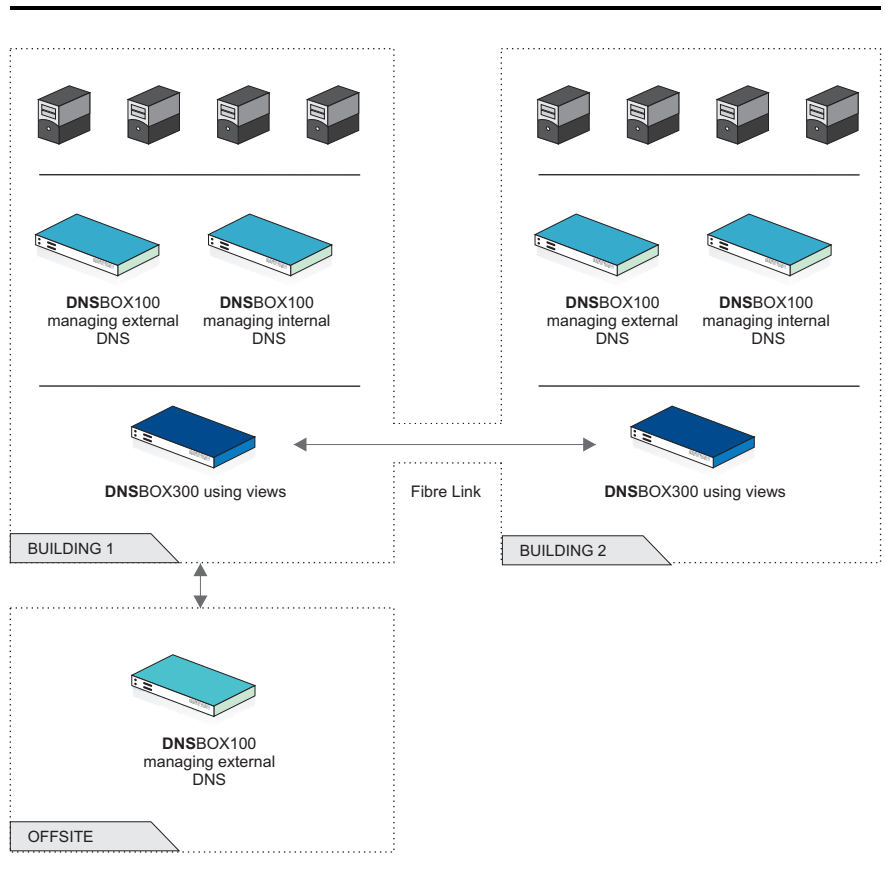
ApplianSys implemented three external DNS slaves (DNSBOX100), two internal DNS slaves and a pair of master DNS servers (DNSBOX300) in an active standby configuration. This meant that one server was live, and in the event of a problem, the other server acted as backup.

ApplianSys created the architecture for the solution, and developed the migration plan for moving from the old system to the new one. It also managed the data conversion from Solaris DHCP to the ISC format.

Thomson commented: "Once we had tidied up and cleared out the redundant data in the old system, it was a very smooth implementation."



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Time saving and easy management

Following the implementation of the new DNS solution, the help desk team no longer have to wait for the infrastructure team to be able to provision new PCs onto the network. Rollouts are happening much more quickly with the result that end users are receiving a much more reliable service.

The solution provided by ApplianSys also provides an audit trail to ensure rollback in the event of problems, due to DNSBox's unlimited undo facility. Errors have also been eliminated because of the built in error checking and validation available in DNSBox.

“We now have an extremely high up time,” said Thomson. “The system is very reliable, and our IT teams are now able to focus on the job in hand. On average we have a couple of PCs a day going on or off the network. Over the year, we can now save a huge amount of time. The help desk team can now manage the desktop rollouts quickly, efficiently and safely, whilst the infrastructure team can focus on driving through new projects around the campus.”

Perfection

The solution that ApplianSys has provided for the School has been so successful that there has been no need for any other work on the network. Explained Thomson: “It's clear to us that the solution we have has been correctly sized. It works, and we have no need to expand it or change it. It's perfect.”



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