

Probrand uses DNSBOX to ensure robust support for online channel

Challenge

Deciding against outsourcing its DNS, Probrand wanted a secure, easy to use solution to protect its online procurement portal from DNS failure.

Solution

ApplianSys **DNSBOX300** - a master DNS server appliance with an embedded high-specification DNS and DHCP management system.

One ApplianSys **DNSBOX100** – dedicated slave appliance equipped with the latest version of BIND and many custom enhancements.

Key Benefits

Website uptime – online sales channel now has a robust DNS backbone to protect against failure and loss of sales

Reliability and simplicity – thanks to easy-to-use web interface administration can be done by junior IT staff

Expert support - reassurance of knowing the system is maintained and updated by experts in DNS management

An extensive IT portfolio

Probrand is a £multi-million business-to-business IT reseller located in the heart of Birmingham in the UK. It provides a full spectrum of products and services from floppy disks to network installation, for customers ranging in size from sole traders to very large corporations.

In addition to traditional sales channels, it also owns an online IT procurement portal called The IT Index, the only site of its type to be accredited by the Institute of Chartered Accountants for England & Wales. The value and importance of the site is immense, generating over £10m of business a year, and accounting for 40% of Probrand's total revenue.

Support need

Probrand had been managing its own DNS for a while, and was running a highly modified instance of BIND on LINUX which had been created and maintained by a senior member of the technical team.

As the demands and importance of the The IT Index grew Probrand began removing services such as email and firewall off the server. Furthermore, it noticed that with the passage of time the DNS system had fallen behind in terms of important features that would help with managing DNS. Probrand recognised it had a need to upgrade its DNS support.

"The intricate nature of our system meant that if anything went wrong, it was becoming more and more challenging to rebuild. As it stood, we could do minor changes in house, but anything more significant required more advanced support", commented Mark Allbutt, Technical Director, Probrand.

Realising problems with the existing DNS system could have a devastating effect on the website and in-turn the business, Probrand initiated an investigation into alternative solutions. High on the list were options to outsource DNS entirely or replacing the existing solution.

"The daily revenue cost of the system going down could be very high and we realised that the cost of a new and outsourced DNS solution made sense. What we really needed was reliability, fault tolerance and support", continued Allbutt.

A reassuring solution

Probrand decided against outsourcing something as vital as DNS. Instead it settled on the idea of an appliance-based solution. For DNS management - where 100% uptime is critical - the appliance format means maximum security and reliability. Plug-and-play devices with tailored management GUIs offer major savings in time, cost and hassle.

After comparing a number of DNS appliances Probrand settled on a **DNSBOX** master and slave combination from ApplianSys. The **DNSBOX** range comes pre-installed with all the DNS software it needs, eliminating the need for Probrand to install OS and DNS server software, acquire and build BIND or patch the software for security vulnerabilities.

DNSBOX provides users with a very simple browser-based interface. It helps eliminate mistakes which can creep in when editing BIND configuration files created by someone who has left the company or moved into a different role. Records created by one user look similar to ones created by another and there is no need for users to worry about formatting, updating serial numbers, and determining the file structure required.

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“DNSBOX gives us peace of mind, which is something we didn't have with our bespoke system. The simplicity of the interface means that DNS management is now accessible to anyone in-house. If we need to make minor changes we can do that easily, but if we have more complex changes we've got the perfect tool to let us drill down to a greater level of complexity”, commented Allbutt.

With the help of ApplianSys, Probrand now has a solution that administers a robust DNS backbone for its online channel. It has DNS management tools for a range of skill levels and has virtually eliminated BIND configuration errors that could be detrimental to the business. Probrand has surety in its DNS, reinforced with a strong belief in ApplianSys products and services.

“DNSBOX is an excellent solution but what really convinced us was ApplianSys' attitude. Other appliance vendors were really inflexible, both in terms of pricing and the way they dealt with us as potential customers. In ApplianSys we have a vendor which makes the effort to work around our requirements, has the people skills to deal with us as a business and the technical expertise to back up its products”, concluded Allbutt.



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