KrollOntrack™
By KrolLDiscovery

Ontrack® PowerControls™ **US**

Case Study

An international organization survives multiple challenges when migrating to Microsoft® Exchange 2010

The Background

Powerful data management tool empowers this customer with turnkey archived Information Store access, mailbox extraction, and recovery.

System upgrades, whether we like them or not, are a necessary part of our technological world. However, in an effort to save costs, many organizations are holding back from rolling out new technology. The impact of this is that once an upgrade is finally approved, multiple complex systems are often upgraded all at once—sometimes involving hardware, software and other IT infrastructure items.

Multiple upgrades increase the risk of complicating the execution or lost user productivity because of delays—at worst is the loss of critical data during the upgrade. In the following situation, an organization is forced to upgrade too many IT assets at once because they did not have the resources to keep up with regular IT maintenance projects.

The Situation

A large service and product organization with multiple international offices took on an Exchange 2010 migration project that would affect all of its locations.

The migration scope was 20 offices, three network domains, and over 6,000 user mailboxes, and included: a Blackberry® Enterprise Server (BES), Outlook Web Access (OWA) services, and the introduction of Microsoft® Forefront® servers to the infrastructure.

The biggest challenge in planning the project was a delayed Windows® Server Domain Active Directory (AD) consolidation that had been in progress for almost a year. Because the business was quickly expanding, many of the satellite offices had set up their own domains with only a trust relationship with the domain of the business headquarters. Due to this, users in those satellite offices could not log on to the headquarters domain and access corporate resources, even when those users had been added with access rights to those resources.

Over the years, shortcuts were taken to get users access to the corporate business systems. Some of these quick fixes increased the complexity of user accounts and even introduced IT security risks. In one example, a satellite office was constantly having access issues but rarely received IT resources to resolve the issues. The office manager was so frustrated that he took matters into his own hands and ordered a second Internet line to the office, setting up a connection with the company's headquarters and remote

controlling a computer to access the organization's CRM business system.

At great risk, the low encryption connection was accessing the Internet from the satellite office and re-entering the organization through an unused network port. When the IT security department found the unauthorized connection, it was shut down immediately and again, this satellite office was without business system resources and had to re-open the original job ticket with IT.

There were so many undocumented fixes such as this that the IT engineer working on the Active Directory design wanted to start over and rebuild the systems from the ground up. Unfortunately, with the number of user accounts and dependencies the organization had within its network, a complete reconstruction was not an option.

The Solution

Ontrack® PowerControls™ was used to extract user mailboxes and copy them during the test migration process, as well as quickly access the archived Information Stores and restore specific messages that had been lost due to user error.

The IT department started a systematic collection of all of the server systems in each office and began documenting an upgrade process that would complete the AD move and lay the foundation for the Exchange 2010 migration.

The impacts were larger than originally estimated and the entire project took 18 months—six months longer than planned. One of the more intricate migrations was for the BES system. There were not enough IT resources to perform the migration for the entire employee population, and as a result, specific instructions were written for users to manually complete the mailbox update on their mobile phones.

If the process was not performed exactly as written, the BES mailbox synchronization process would work in reverse and all of the user's archived email data would be lost. Inevitably, some users lost data but fortunately, prior to the upgrade, the IT department's business continuity plan accommodated for user error and multiple backups were completed at various stages in an effort to minimize data loss.

This organization used Ontrack PowerControls to extract user mailboxes and copy them during the test migration process. Additionally, it was utilized to quickly access the archived and/or back up tape media of Information Stores for those users who had not followed the BES migration instructions. Some users had lost messages during the migration process, however Ontrack PowerControls was used to quickly extract those specific messages from the backups and restore them to the users without having to wait for a normal backup restoration request.

This project was long and tedious, and it required diligence and patience to work through all of the phases and milestones. Yet with a savvy IT staff and the use of additional tools to get the job done, this migration was a success.

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