

GLOBETEAM



Case story: COWI

Complete modernization of COWI's
server infrastructure

- with Windows Server 2003, Active Directory and
Exchange Server 2003



Complete modernization of COWI's IT infrastructure

COWI's existing service infrastructure was worn out and could no longer meet the business' needs and wishes for globalization. Within 12 months, COWI therefore carried through a complete modernization of its service infrastructure in co-operation with Globeteam. The result was a flexible and stabile platform that meets COWI's demands and goals for the business and simultaneously demands considerably less resources to manage and maintain.

COWI is a leading, international consultancy firm that works with engineer technology, environment and economics all over the world. Today, the conglomerate has 3400 employees that are dispersed over 14 regional offices and a number of subsidiary companies in Denmark and abroad. COWI's worldwide business activities are focusing on IT and make altogether great demands from the company's IT infrastructure. When COWI's existing infrastructure needed to be upgraded to a more up-to-date and stabile platform, the project started with counselor assistance from Globeteam. "A principle cause for upgrading our platform was a pressure from the organization to develop different solutions that could support and satisfy the business' needs. Needs that couldn't be realized on our old platform. Therefore, there was a need for an ambitious renewal of COWI's IT infrastructure", says Jan Davidsen, who works as a project manager and daily group manager in COWI's IT infrastructure.

Stable and flexible server platform

Windows Server 2003 was the foundation of COWI's global business activities. Within 12 months – from the project planning to the project finalization and follow-up – COWI in co-operation with Globeteam carried through a complete modernization of the conglomerate's IT infrastructure. "The goal was to achieve a more flexible, stable and uniform platform that could improve the company's efficiency at all levels: Development, implementation, integration and daily system administration. It succeeded 100%. The gains have been great; among other things COWI has made the co-operation with its regional offices and subsidiary companies more efficient, which strategically has great influence on COWI's competitive power", Jan Davidsen says and continues: "Moreover, the solution's flexibility meant that we have had resources to centrally control and monitor four subsidiary companies' and one project office's infrastructure from our main office in Lyngby".

The choice of Windows Server 2003 is also due to the efficient administrative facilities in the shape of Active Directory (AD). The existing structure of rights in NT 4.0 was flat and gave a very central administration, which meant logon on several independent systems. Therefore, there was also a need for a more flexible user- and resources administration. "We had different problems with our user databases. Both our Exchange and Windows were user databases, which was why we would like to consolidate and simultaneously obtain the time- and resource savings that the implementation of AD could bring along", says Jan Davidsen.



Problem:

COWI's existing server infrastructure was run down and could no longer meet the business' needs and future strategy. The reason for this was the following:

- ✦ COWI's current server operating system – Windows NT Server 4.0 – is no longer improved and Service Packs are no longer delivered.
- ✦ COWI's current system – Exchange Server 5.5 – is no longer improved after at the turn of the year 2004 /2005 and Service Packs are no longer delivered.
- ✦ Windows 2000 or newer versions were a precondition for a number of new service products that was expected to be implemented COWI.

Solution:

The establishment of a shared IT infrastructure based on Windows Server 2003.

- ✦ Windows Server 2003
- ✦ Active Directory
- ✦ Exchange Server 2003

Advantages:

An efficient global co-operation and knowledge sharing with project offices and subsidiary companies in Denmark and abroad. Simultaneously, the stable and flexible platform supports COWI's globalization wish and has resulted in economical and administrative advantages.

COWI

COWI is a leading international consultancy firm that is occupied with engineer technique, environment and economics all over the world. COWI has 14 regional offices spread all over Denmark and counts a number of subsidiary companies abroad. COWI employs a total of 3400 employees.

“Globeteam's profile of competence and unique business model appealed to us. Thus, COWI is ensured consultants mentioned by name with expert knowledge, experience and great commitment. This was the most important reason why we chose Globeteam – plus that the server implementation was a success and was carried through “on time” and “on budget””, says Jan Davidsen.

Efficient mail system reduce cases of “fire extinguishing”

As part of the same project, COWI in co-operation with Globeteam carried through an upgrading of Exchange. COWI's existing mail system, based on Exchange Server 5.5, was upgraded to Exchange Server 2003. Among other things, the advantage was a consolidation of the number- and the placement of mailbox servers. *“Today, COWI's mail-system consolidated from 6 to 2 servers. Thus, decentralized locations have been released from work with the operation, which means that today, the mail system demands considerably less resources to manage”,* says Jan Davidsen. With the Exchange Server 2003, COWI simultaneously obtained an improved disaster recovery-situation. Today, this means, according to Jan Davidsen, that COWI considerably faster than before can get Exchange to function in the case of total disaster.

“Another important advantage with Exchange 2003 was that we obtained a significant speed improvement plus much greater flexibility for our employees in the house”, says Jan Davidsen. Today, with Web Access (OWA) and on-line synchronization of the user's mailbox with Windows based PDAs, COWI's employees have a far better opportunity to synchronize appointments and read mails, when they are on the move or from at home. Therefore, colleagues and consumers experience a much faster response on their e-mails than earlier.

Painless upgrading in spite of challenges

Because COWI is a very intense and advanced user of IT, the project had to handle approximately 20.000 groups, 10 Tb file data, more than 70.000 public folders with 400 Gb data and 250 Gb maildata. Impressive numbers that in connection with the upgrading of Windows Server and Exchange Server were a great challenge. *“Precisely because the Windows Server 2003 puts a greater emphasis on safety, Microsoft has developed other methods to validate the users and their memberships of groups. This means that Windows Server 2003 no longer can handle the same number of groups as the old system and that caused some problems along the way. However, with Globeteam's assistance we succeeded in carrying through the project with success”,* Jan Davidsen concludes.

“With the stabilization of our platform, we have achieved both administrative and economical gains. Today, even though our services have grown significantly, we can manage the IT operation with the same number of employees. Furthermore, the server platform supports COWI's commercial goals far better”, says Jan Davidsen.

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