

GLOBETEAM



Four employees control the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' global server operation

- with a special developed SMS solution from Globeteam





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The Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' global server environment imposes great requirements to flexibility, functionality and standardization. The installation of a specially designed SMS solution from Globeteam has given the IT department in the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs a very efficient tool to stabilize and maintain hundreds of servers placed in embassies all over the world. It is now possible for four men to control the entire server operation.

Two years ago, the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs chose to insource the systems management of the ministry's 350 Windows 2000/2003 servers, of which 180 servers are spread out on 85 locations all over the world. Previously, the ministry had pursued a decentralized strategy that didn't work optimally especially because of the great geographical distances and the embassies lack of resources to handle the maintenance. In order to obtain a more efficient operation the ministry decided to centralize the operation. However, changes in resources made a crucial demand - the operation should run with the same manpower. That means only four men.

Alignment and control of the servers

The market was scanned for possible solutions and the ministry chose the consultancy Globeteam that are based on Microsoft's systems management tool, Systems Management Server (SMS 2003).

"There were several different reasons why the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs chose Globeteam's solution. First Globeteam's solution covered 80% of the needs we had. Second we thought it was an advantage that the solution was easy to integrate in the existing Microsoft platform" says the leader of the server group in the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' IT department Bjørn Lysholm Jensen. He continues, "The first great challenge for us was that the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' servers had become more and more different in set-up. We had gradually lost the overview of the different servers and that made our maintenance job difficult".

To get a full perspective over the current situation on software, SMS 2003 was used to gather configuration information from the servers in order to identify differences and make the set-up the same all over. Next step was to develop a specially designed solution based on SMS 2003 that could distribute software to the servers. A solution that, according to Bjørn Lysholm Jensen, was very ambitious, but none the less has been successful which has meant that Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has achieved both administrative and economical gains.



Problem:

The Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' servers had become more and more difficult to maintain, because they were not configured in the same way. At the same time it was both expensive and time demanding to upgrade and install new software on the servers.

Solution:

Microsoft Systems Management Server (SMS 2003). Globeteams SMS based solution is used to gather configuration data and align servers. Further, the solution also supported the distribution of changes and software up-dates to all servers for example:

- ✦ Unrolling of Windows 2000 SP4
- ✦ Upgrading of Exchange 2000 to 2003
- ✦ Installment of Exchange 2003 SP
- ✦ Firmware upgrading at all servers

Advantages:

Today, the installment of Globeteam's SMS based solution has meant that just four men in the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs server group can manage the ministry's global servers faster, easier and much more efficient. The successful use of the SMS solution has resulted in great administrative and economical gains.

The Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' IT department consists of 40 employees, of whom four have the responsibility for the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' 350 servers distributed in embassies all over the world. On every location two servers are placed – one to classified and one to unclassified

“Because of changes in our resources it was important for us that the service operation could be handled by four men in the server group. Globeteam's solution has not just met our crucial demands. Vi have systematized our work processes and achieved a functional and more stable operation”, says Bjørn Lysholm Jensen.

Four men control the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' servers

In cooperation with the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Globeteam developed a solution that currently makes it possible to install and update new software to servers with SMS 2003. Distribution of software, for instance, is perceived as a client, which was not originally a part of the Microsoft system.

“The greatest challenge was to use SMS 2003 to install Service Pack 4 to Windows 2000 on all servers. Our ambition was to update the servers centrally with just four men – without having to involve people on the different locations. Many thought that this could not be done. However, it was a 100% success”, says Bjørn Lysholm Jensen that are clearly very happy with the solution.

Quick and cost-saving system

The installation of the SMS 2003 solution has additionally increased the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' business flexibility by accelerating their ability to distribute the most up-to-date software to the users. *“Earlier it took months before an upgrade was implemented fully. Often we had to send local or Danish specialists to the individual embassies and that took a lot of time and money. With the SMS solution we can in principle change environment from one hour to the next”, says Bjørn Lysholm Jensen.* The next big change that the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs carried through with the SMS solution was the upgrading of Exchange from 2000 to 2003. The upgrading ran successfully and on schedule and was a great gain for the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs both when it comes to functionality and as an investment. According to Bjørn Lysholm Jensen has the amount saved in connection with the upgrading paid for the system.

“The investment we have made buying the system is earned just by the upgrading of Exchange 2000 to 2003. At the same time we have obtained a supreme tool to manage and handle relevant software to servers quick and efficient”, says Bjørn Lysholm Jensen.

The Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' successful employment of Globeteam's SMS solution has contributed to the ministry winning the Digitalisation price in 2004 – a price established by among others the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, the Danish Ministry of Finance and the Danish IT Industry Association – in the category “Correlated IT infrastructure”. The ministry won the price because they had reduced the IT expenses by 50 per cent and aligned IT at their representations all over the world.

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Globeteam's SMS based solution

SMS 2003 makes up the core of Globeteam's solution. SMS 2003 is employed as the foundation for both gathering of configuration data from servers as well as distribution of changes and software up-dates for the servers. In addition SMS is used to identification of inadequate safety corrections and distribution of authorized safety corrections.

Globeteam has in corporation with the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs developed a solution based on SMS 2003. This solution makes it possible to collect much more configuration data for services and systems, including configuration of Exchange, Windows, Active Directory, IIS and SQL. Further, information concerning safety groups is withdrawn from the individual servers. This huge amount of detailed information about servers are presented in a large number of different reports in SMS' own reporting system as well as in a specially developed report system. The system makes a comparison of the many different types of information possible – and that makes it an efficient and manageable work tool for the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' server operation in the every day.

SMS' build in distribution mechanism is employed to the distribution of changes, software up-dates, and correction of flaws on the servers. Globeteam has developed adjustments to the SMS' distribution systems, which make sure that the changes only are installed within a specified period, so that the users do not experience problems with the servers outside the service windows.

Moreover, the SMS 2003 based solution collect historical information, which in a simple way makes it possible for the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to see, how the configurations have changes over time. This gives the ministry an opportunity to comprehend why problems arise by looking at what changes have happened on a server at a given time.

Globeteam has on the foundation of the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Change Management process adjusted SMS 2003 so that the installation status of the individual changes are registered and it is possible to compare the configuration on the server before and after the change is carried out. Possible flaws that have occurred during installation are reported in Microsoft Operations Manager, which makes it possible to take action and correct flaws fast.

“When we in the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs use consultancy assistance, it is important that we get value for the money we invest in consultancy services. We have a high level of ambition and it is important for us that the consultants also have that same high level of ambition. We experience Globeteam's consultants as very ambitious and professional. Their consulting service has given successful results and a great advantage for the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs”, says the leader of the server group in the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' IT department Bjørn Lysholm Jensen.

“Our relation to and corporation with Globeteam means that today it is much easier to bridge the knowledge we have in the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the knowledge that exist among the consultants”, says Bjørn Lysholm Jensen.

Globeteam works independently of both supplier- and producer interests. The company has only one goal – to be the client's man. As independent supplier we focus on reliability and quality. Globeteam differentiate from other companies by attracting only the very best consultants which gives us a unique ability to carry through innovative projects successfully. Globeteam's unique business concept makes sure that the customer receives 100% commitment, senior consultants and continuity in the working process. Today, Globeteam provides service to a wide range of the biggest companies in Denmark which has given us a great in-depth understanding of Microsoft's entire platform. In addition to offering Microsoft consultancy services, Globeteam also delivers services within the field of IT strategy, big development projects, IT Service Management, Project Management, ERP, Human Touch and recruiting.