

client info *at a glance*

Company: Points of Light Foundation

Web Address: www.pointsoflight.org

Industry: Charity

Location: Washington, DC

Company Overview:

The Points of Light Foundation is a national, nonpartisan and non-profit organization headquartered in Washington, DC dedicated to engaging more people and resources more effectively in volunteer service to help solve serious social problems.



Points of Light Foundation — Linking Millions of Volunteers Over the Web

There are people who like to help, and there are people who need help. Connecting the two is the job of the Points of Light Foundation and Volunteer Center National Network. The non-profit organization acts as a clearinghouse for volunteer activities nationwide. It provides guidance and leadership for 360 volunteer centers around the country, and also runs MissionFish. MissionFish is a way for non-profits to receive donations through sales on eBay. In 2003, it listed more than half a million volunteer opportunities at 75,000 agencies, and connected two million volunteers with these opportunities. But all those activities would grind to a halt if its Oracle databases and WebLogic servers fail.

The Environment

The Points of Light Foundation has 55 servers hosted at an AOL collocation facility, running a mix of Sun Solaris, Red Hat Linux 3.0 and Windows 2000. These servers exist primarily to support its external activities rather than its own staff. The Foundation only has 130 employees, 20 of them in IT. System Administrator Carlos Estrada says a certain number of these servers are critical to providing its public activities.

“We have two WebLogic servers and an Oracle database server supporting our MissionFish activities and another pair of WebLogic and Oracle servers for our 1-800-Volunteer site,” he says. “These are where the core of our production occurs.”

The Challenge

Estrada says that he had limited ability to manage the servers, especially since they were not under his physical control. Although operations would shut down if there was a problem with any of the servers, budget to buy management software was not available. He initially got by with a low-

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end management tool that provided limited functionality. As time went by, that was no longer an option.

“We were launching MissionFish and we wanted to do it right,” he explains. “It was a nice project because it is the exclusive non-profit for eBay.”

Through MissionFish, sellers can designate what portion of their sales they want to go to the non-profit of their choice. MissionFish collects the money from the seller and distributes it to the non-profits. But before the system went live, eBay wanted to run some testing on the servers.

“We were lacking a lot of visibility into the servers,” he says. “We really needed an online monitoring tool that gave us alerts so we could immediately respond to any problems. But we are a non-profit organization with limited resources, so we had to find the best solution without having to spend a lot of money.”

The Solution

What he was looking for was sitting on his shelf. He had received a copy of TeamQuest Lite as an insert from a magazine but had never tried it.

“I pulled the CD that had TeamQuest Lite and installed it,” Estrada says. “It helped a lot.”

To get more functionality, though, he ordered TeamQuest On the Web* so he could remotely manage his servers. TeamQuest’s support helped him get it running in short order.

“When I started installing TeamQuest their tech support staff called me every day and we went through the process together,” he says. “Then when the software was running, they gave me all

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the tricks, showed me how to generate all the reports, told me everything I needed to know. I felt completely satisfied when I had it running that I had a working solution in place that would give me what I needed.

The Benefits

Estrada set up TeamQuest On the Web to monitor a variety of parameters including CPU utilization, memory utilization, I/O reads on the hard drive, page memory utilization and throughput. He also uses the scripting function to take action to address problems automatically. For example, when the CPU goes over 60%, it can run a command to force memory release on the system. In addition, he uses the historical trending features to perform rudimentary capacity planning.

“Right now we are seeing the average load on the database server CPU increasing, but we don’t need to panic,” he explains. “By looking at the historical metrics I can see that, if we continue at the current growth rate, in November of next year we will need another server to balance the load.”

“This means I can sleep in peace. I know that if I don’t get paged, the system is running just fine.”

Keeping the servers running smoothly has generated benefits all around. In its first 18 months of operation, MissionFish has generated \$5 million in donations for the nearly five thousand non-profits in its database. eBay also benefits from the goodwill generated by supporting this non-profit activity. For Estrada, the benefit from the TeamQuest software comes in terms of peace of mind. He has alarms set to email or page him when thresholds are exceeded, and otherwise he doesn’t need to worry about the servers.

“This means I can sleep in peace,” he says. “I know that if I don’t get paged, the system is running just fine.”

* TeamQuest On the Web is now packaged with TeamQuest IT Service

About TeamQuest Corporation

TeamQuest Corporation is the global leader in IT Service Optimization (ITSO), specializing in Capacity Management software. TeamQuest helps IT organizations consistently meet service levels while minimizing costs and mitigating risks. By combining performance data and business metrics, TeamQuest software enables IT organizations to provide accurate, objective information as input to critical business decisions. Companies around the world trust TeamQuest software to help them proactively improve service delivery and support best practices.

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