

Company: Verisign

Web Address: www.verisign.com

Industry: Retail

Location: Mountainview, CA

Company Overview:

VeriSign, Inc. is the leading provider of digital trust services that enable everyone everywhere to engage in commerce and communications with confidence. VeriSign's digital trust services create a trusted environment through four core offerings — Web presence services, telecommunications services, security services and payment services — powered by a global infrastructure that manages billions of network connections and transactions a day.



VeriSign Staying Ahead of the Curve: A Case Study

The Environment

Poor capacity planning can take a data center by surprise and create a number of unhappy customers — imagine having millions, or even billions to satisfy. VeriSign, Inc. does battle with this issue on a daily basis. Process flow and system load balancing can get out of control if you're not careful. VeriSign understands this, and adheres to service level agreements (SLAs) and a performance management and capacity planning strategy that guarantees quality service for billions of transactions each day — without any problems.

With hundreds of servers in their UNIX environment, VeriSign Global Registry Services (VGRS) is a key part of the internet infrastructure. It provides and supports mission-critical services to over 100 mass-market internet domain name registration organizations, including .com, .net, and other top-level domains.

VeriSign Shared Registration System (SRS), a global registry managed by the VGRS team, is comprised of a large array of functions, including online transaction processing systems (OLTP), analytical processing systems (OLAP), secure access channels, FTP services and Web-based tools.

The Challenge

Initial SRS developers built the system with growth in mind. They knew they needed a capacity planning solution. When VeriSign came to TeamQuest Corporation, the SRS was in its second year of production. They knew the time was coming to grow the system, but there was no precedent to base a decision on what or how much to purchase down the road. In other words, they were working from scratch. "We were exceeding Moore's Law, and needed to constantly stay ahead of the curve," said Gathje.

"Our resolution system alone handles seven to eight billion daily transactions. That's three times the number of daily transactions recorded throughout the entire telephone system in North America," said Mark Gathje, director of registry operations. **A long, drawn out systems growth phase is not an option. They need something that works, and works fast.**

Three vendors were selected for a two-week, hands-on evaluation on ease of use, feature sets and analytical capabilities. Based on a recommendation from a former coworker, TeamQuest was included on the “short list.”

“One product had analytical capabilities, but was so complex that it would require a dedicated analyst,” said Mike Wilson, who is in charge of capacity planning at VeriSign. “Another product, though much simpler, was non-intuitive and again, would have required extended study or formal training. Of the three, only TeamQuest offered a well-provisioned package that could be installed and used with ease.”

“We needed a logically-phased progression to grow the software, or we would be left with very unhappy customers.”

The Solution

VeriSign chose a combination of TeamQuest® products for their performance management solution, including TeamQuest View, TeamQuest Alert, TeamQuest On the Web, and TeamQuest Model. TeamQuest Performance Software was “very clearly the way we wanted to go,” said Wilson. It offered more than the required feature set and was “surprisingly easy to use,” he continued. “We plugged it in and it worked — it was very clearly the all-around best choice for our needs.

“Single system installation took 10 minutes on the first try. And the first customized “user probe” was implemented in four hours, from opening the manual to data on the screen,” said Wilson, referring to a custom-built agent. “Enterprise implementation took about 2 days, once standards and quality assurance obligations were met.”

The Benefits

Since installation, core transaction systems are successfully

scaled in advance of demand growth, and stress tests are performed on candidate hardware and software prior to going live. “We are able to do capacity planning without suspending production,” said Wilson. “Without TeamQuest we would have had a lot of surprises.”

The most useful feature for VeriSign GRS has been the customization capability, which has been used to create a tool to monitor SLA compliance in near real time.

“Because of the service level that our customers demand, there can be no surprises in production,” said Wilson. “TeamQuest tools have provided decision support for operational protocol definition and have helped quantify correlations between workload parameters. It’s been a very effective modeling tool to help us find where we begin to approach the cliff,” he continued.

The ability to export data to a Microsoft Excel™ spreadsheet was seen as a “stroke of genius” by VeriSign. “It’s easy to manipulate the data once it’s in a spreadsheet,” said Wilson.

Many [performance management applications] don’t do a very effective job of delivering reports, and making data easy to summarize and archive. TeamQuest does.”

In the future, VeriSign GRS can rely on TeamQuest Performance Software as they grow their systems. “We can keep our customers happy without the fear of the ‘sky falling.’ We’re able to stay ahead of the curve,” said Gathje.

“[TeamQuest] is robust enough that it generally has what you need,” said Gathje, “— and the learning curve is nearly zero. With someone else it may take months to get up to speed, and even then that tool may still only offer limited capabilities.” VeriSign didn’t have time to spare.

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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