



Icopal Case Study



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Peter Toft
IT Manager
Icopal a/s

Roofing for the World

Icopal is the world's leading producer of roofing and waterproofing membranes and the market leader in the Nordic countries in roofing contracting. The company product portfolio also includes other construction materials for the protection of buildings and other structures. Icopal annual sales are approximately EUR 740 million and the company employs 3,500 people in 35 manufacturing sites and 50 offices throughout Europe, North America and Asia, with its headquarters in Denmark. The company's Danish IT infrastructure consists of 450 workstations and 53 servers in 13 different locations.

Keeping Ahead of the Competition

Icopal recognizes that IT is becoming a major part of their competitive edge, but the day-by-day activities of the IT staff in responding to user complaints and troubleshooting various application and network performance problems left very little time for the strategic initiatives demanded by corporate management. The IT department under manager Peter Toft decided to commit to a review and cleanup of applications,

the application infrastructure, and the support routines so that they could allocate the necessary IT resources to move Icopal for to a more competitive position.

Seeing is Believing

The company installed an ACE Live appliance at Icopal's Danish data center, which gave the company's IT department immediate access to over 60 metrics—performance, utilization, route quality, and ISP performance—across all 13 sites via a simple mirror port connection to a primary switch.

"We could immediately see information that had been very difficult to discover," says Mr. Toft. "Then we programmed the appliance with information about our critical applications and the user and resource groups using them, which gave us even greater visibility."

ACE Live allows users to identify applications by port/protocol, server, and URL, and to group network resources and user groups by IP address or AS number. It then presents all metrics in the context of those business-related groupings. "We could quickly see the business impact of any given problem," says Toft. "It was no longer just a matter of an IP address with a problem; we knew which users were affected, and which application."

Icopal Problems

- Inability to quickly troubleshoot performance problems
- Difficulty supporting full range of user activities and demands
- No overview of network: who's talking to whom, what applications
- Too much time fire-fighting, no time for new business-critical IT projects

ACE Live Solution

- ACE Live deployed in main data center
- Monitor performance and utilization for all critical applications and links
- Real-time and historical view of wide range of application and network metrics

Icopal Benefits

- Much faster problem localization and resolution
- Overview of network and application activity for all Danish locations and factories
- Better understanding of user needs and service levels
- More time for business-critical IT projects, improved IT support for business strategy

Optimizing the Infrastructure

Using the extensive set of metrics and the rich user interface of ACE Live, the Icopal IT staff was able to streamline operation of the network, maximizing throughput and make the most effective use of various servers and workstations. The extensive analysis of the network made possible by ACE Live led to a dramatic reduction in packet loss and downtime.

As well, the IT department had been tasked with making the central ERP system available to four other companies in the Icopal supply chain. The deep insight into the components of ERP application response delivered by ACE Live enabled them to optimize the AS-400 Movex platform to support this extension. Field access to the Lotus Notes-based CRM system was also improved.

One of the most notable benefits from the IT department's point of view was increased user satisfaction with application performance. The network is no longer blamed for every problem. "The users are happier now, so the IT staff doesn't have to crawl under the floorboards when they go for coffee," says Mr. Toft.

The Bottom Line

The powerful user interface of ACE Live, with its extensive set of charts, tables, and topological displays, played a major role in helping Icopal's IT department restructure their day-to-day support activities for more efficient operation, freeing up valuable time for strategic initiatives. "It gave us increased insight into our infrastructure and how it supports our business," says Toft, "and helped us

prioritize our IT investments going forward." In fact, he notes, ACE Live paid for itself several times over in just a few weeks. "The increased visibility helps us make better use of existing resources, and actually eliminated the need for several additional IT investments planned for next year," says Mr. Toft. "And we can put that money to good use."

For more information,
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