

# Linking Millions of Volunteers Over the Web

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## Case Study

*TeamQuest specializes in IT Service Optimization*

## Client Info at a Glance

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**Company:** Nonprofit Organization

**Location:** Washington, DC



**Organization Description:** This national, nonpartisan, non-profit organization headquartered in Washington, DC is dedicated to engaging more people and resources more effectively in volunteer service to help solve serious social problems.

**Business Value of TeamQuest:** Keeping this non-profit organization's servers running smoothly has generated benefits all around. In its first 18 months of operation, the organization's new site has generated \$5 million in donations for the nearly five thousand non-profits in its database.

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There are people who like to help, and there are people who need help. Connecting the two is the job of this non-profit organization, which acts as a clearing-house for volunteer activities nationwide. It provides guidance and leadership for 360 volunteer centers around the country. This group also runs a service allowing non-profits to receive donations through sales on eBay. In a single year, 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 non-profit organization has 55 servers hosted at a collocation facility, running a mix of Solaris, Red Hat Linux and Windows. These servers exist primarily to support its external activities rather than its own staff. This group only has 130 employees, 20 of them in IT. The foundation's system administrator 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 {one area of operations} and another pair of WebLogic and Oracle servers for our {other website}," he says. "These are where the core of our production occurs."

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# The Challenge

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

“We were launching [a new site] and we wanted to do it right,” he explains.

Through this site, eBay auction sellers can designate what portion of their sales they want to go to the non-profit of their choice. The site 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.”

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## The Solution

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

“I pulled the CD... and installed it,” the administrator says. “It helped a lot.”

To get more functionality, though, he ordered additional TeamQuest software 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 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.

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## The Benefits

The system administrator set up TeamQuest software 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 a 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.

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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."

Keeping the servers running smoothly has generated benefits all around. In its first 18 months of operation, the organization's new site 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 the system administrator, 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."

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