

How an International Domain Name Registry Stays Ahead of the Curve

Case Study

Client Info at a Glance

Company: Domain Name Registry

Location: USA



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Organization Description: This leading provider of digital trust services enables everyone everywhere to engage in commerce and communications with confidence. Their four core offerings — Web presence, telecommunications, security and payment — are powered by a global infrastructure that manages billions of network connections and transactions a day

Business Value of TeamQuest: TeamQuest software is used to perform capacity planning without suspending production. Core transaction systems are scaled in advance of demand growth, and stress tests are performed on candidate hardware and software prior to going live.

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. This global domain registry service 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. The provider 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, this service provider 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.

The global registry 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

The initial system developers built their services with growth in mind. They knew they needed a capacity planning solution. When this service provider came to TeamQuest Corporation, the system was in its second year of production. They knew the time was coming to expand hardware capacity, 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 the director.

“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 The 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 the provider’s lead capacity planner. “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

The organization chose a combination of TeamQuest® products for their performance management solution. TeamQuest software was “very clearly the way we wanted to go,” said the lead planner. 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 the planner, 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 the planner. “Without TeamQuest we would have had a lot of surprises.”

The most useful feature for this company 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 the planner. “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 the company. “It’s easy to manipulate the data once it’s in a spreadsheet,” he said.

“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, the organization 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 an analyst.

“[TeamQuest] is robust enough that it generally has what you need – 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.”

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