

Extraco Banks

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CASE STUDY

Extraco Banks replaces Microsoft* with Novell® solutions as its primary network environment to significantly improve security and reduce administration costs.

OVERVIEW

Extraco is the largest independent financial institution in Central Texas with more than 70,000 customers and over 500 employees. Extraco, headquartered in Waco, Texas, offers trust, insurance, investments, mortgage and technology solutions to complement its traditional bank product line.

CHALLENGE

With technology related projects and responsibilities nearly tripling over the past few years, Extraco's limited number of IT personnel were overwhelmed with the administrative support required to maintain its Microsoft BackOffice* and Windows* desktop environment. With the increased number and frequency of security updates released by Microsoft, the amount of time spent testing and applying patches quickly became a full-time job. Because of this, the IT department could not move forward with strategic goals without additional resources.

Extraco was also dissatisfied with the capabilities of its Microsoft Exchange e-mail system. Without centralized administrative tools to manage message archival and deletion policies, storage space became a problem. In addition, the server had to be taken offline in order to perform maintenance on the mail database, which resulted in user downtime and extra off-hours work for IT personnel.

Extraco used Microsoft SMS for both server and desktop management, but became frustrated with its unreliable deployment of applications and patches throughout the organization. The workstation management and inventory components of SMS also failed to meet the needs of the company.

IT struggled to maintain its hardware and software infrastructure, and spent days on the road maintaining that infrastructure at its 16 locations. The company needed a reliable solution that would control costs, enable centralized administration, and facilitate a secure environment through the deployment of applications and patches.

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—Lee Underwood,
Vice President,
Network Security
and Administration,
Extraco

Novell.

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—Mike Tarbet,
Systems Administrator,
Extraco

SOLUTION

Extraco concluded that migrating its network environment from Microsoft to a comprehensive Novell solution would dramatically improve corporate security while reducing hardware, administration and licensing costs. The bank moved its network to Novell NetWare® and Novell eDirectory™, migrated to Novell GroupWise® for e-mail and collaboration tools, and selected the Novell ZENworks® 6 Suite to manage its desktops and servers.

“We simply had to find a better solution to address the increasing security issues and administration costs,” says John Scholten, Extraco SVP and Director of Information Systems. “Novell has an exceptional record for security and performance. When we showed our management team the pros and cons, they quickly became believers.”

Reclaiming nights and weekends

Extraco had already experienced NetWare at work at its main mortgage location, where four

NetWare servers kept the office running with minimal IT support. By implementing NetWare throughout its organization, Extraco consolidated its servers, saving significant hardware and software costs.

“With NetWare, we can do more with fewer servers,” said Lee Underwood, Extraco VP of Network Security and Administration.

“Performance is also exponentially better than with our Windows NT servers. NetWare has far exceeded my expectations.”

NetWare provides increased server uptime throughout its entire enterprise. The low number of critical updates released by Novell in comparison to Microsoft alleviated the amount of downtime associated with patch application. With the simplified administration made possible by Novell eDirectory, the IT staff can perform online repairs to remote servers without disrupting user productivity.

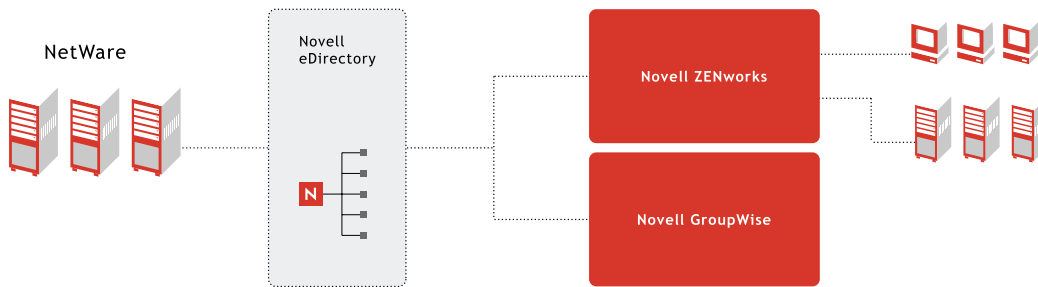
Improved e-mail security and storage

Novell GroupWise 6.5 in a Novell Cluster Services™ environment provides increased security and

BUSINESS NEEDS	RESULTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce administration costs while keeping pace with rapid growth • Improve e-mail security • Simplify server and desktop management across 16 locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased administration time, and reduced hardware, software and labor costs • Grew infrastructure 300 percent without adding new IT staff • Dramatically improved corporate security • Eliminated nearly 100 percent of IT travel time to install applications and updates

SOLUTION

- Novell NetWare, Novell GroupWise, Novell ZENworks



Extraco Banks replaced Microsoft with Novell solutions to manage its central office and 16 locations.

reliability for Extraco’s e-mail system. The IT staff can perform maintenance while the system is up and running, eliminating the necessity of downtime.

“Now we can make any needed repairs to our post office in the middle of the day without taking our system down,” said Underwood.

Extraco has more than 500 GroupWise users, including remote users in offices throughout the country. GroupWise WebAccess gives users secure e-mail access through a standard Web browser. WebAccess is a cost-effective solution for users who don’t need a full-featured collaboration tool. A Novell iChain® server provides a secure front-end to keep the system safe from hackers.

With the ability to administratively schedule archival and deletion of expired user e-mail messages, Extraco can reduce the time and cost associated with network backups.

“We want to be able to use our existing resources more effectively,” said Scholten. “Although we’ve tripled the number of sites we support, we haven’t had to hire additional staff.”

Desktop management with just a few clicks

Novell ZENworks 6 suite revolutionized desktop and server management for Extraco’s 16 locations.

From the central office, IT can deliver patches and new applications to the entire organization in a matter of minutes, practically eliminating the need to travel to other sites.

“It’s unbelievable that one person can manage 200 applications for more than 500 users,” says Mike Tarbet, Extraco Systems Administrator. “Everything we used to do manually we can now do with ZENworks in just a few clicks.”

The Help Desk takes advantage of the remote management and workstation imaging capabilities in ZENworks to provide faster and more efficient user support. If a problem takes too much time to resolve, the technician can remotely re-image the workstation in about 10 minutes to get the user back online as soon as possible. The company has also used ZENworks to improve corporate security by deploying Windows group policies to lock down workstations, thereby preventing users from installing unapproved software or having direct access to local drives on the workstation without IT’s consent.

Extraco stores users’ home directories on their local site server. Using ZENworks, the data is synchronized on a nightly basis back to a storage



server at the central office. Tape backups are then made from the centralized data repository. This process has eliminated the need to manage backup tapes and drives at each location. ZENworks synchronizes only changes to files, which minimizes bandwidth requirements across the WAN connections.

RESULTS

By migrating from a Microsoft to a Novell environment, Extraco has dramatically improved corporate security, decreased administration time, and reduced its hardware, software and labor costs. Using Novell products, Extraco now maintains a higher percentage of uptime throughout its entire enterprise, thus reducing the costs associated with service interruptions. The company has grown its network infrastructure more than 300 percent in the past three years without adding a single technician.

“The headaches with other systems just aren’t worth it,” says Underwood. “We would have to double our staff, double our servers, and double the amount of time we spend on maintenance—and still not be as efficient as we are today.”

Novell GroupWise has greatly reduced the overall time required to administer its e-mail system, and provides secure e-mail access to remote users without a VPN.

The centralized desktop management of Novell ZENworks makes it possible for one person to manage 200 applications for more than 500 users. The company has eliminated nearly 100 percent of IT travel time to install applications and updates.

“With Novell, we have shifted our focus from maintenance to other projects and new technology,” says Joshua Tibbit, Extraco Network Administrator. “We now have time for training, which greatly improves staff morale.”

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