

Background

Nine municipalities in the Norwegian province Sogn and Fjordane had their own separate IT-systems. The set-ups were manual, ineffective, demanded a lot of resources and were incompatible.

In 2006, the planning of a centralized system for all the municipalities started. The first shared IT-systems were launched in 2008. A new organization called SYSIKT (Sunnfjord and Ytre Sogn IKT) was formed and located in the municipality Førde. SYSIKT is now building a joint domain for all the municipalities, using Citrix as the distribution platform.

SYSIKT administers the shared server park, backup and operating systems and is using RES Automation Manager for execution, upgrades, installations and maintenance of software and applications for 1200 users. Their system is split in one administrative and one safe zone, the last mainly for the social services and health sector.

"SYSIKT has increased our expertise a lot more than if we had continued to operate separately. Our operating environment is a lot better and backup is safer and less vulnerable," says Einen.

Challenge

SYSIKT installed RES Automation Manager in the fall of 2008. The tool can execute changes and IT tasks on any Microsoft Windows based server or PC. By using so called "Run-Books", the tasks can be automated and combined, which totally eliminates the need for manual operations. Before using RES Automation Manager SYSIKT had to access and configure every server manually, risking unsynchronized machines and ultimately inconsistent user experiences.

Our main argument for implementing RES was the fact that all tasks can be automated. We saw that this would save us

a lot of time. Now I can't understand how we managed without it, says Einen.

Manual server installations could take a full day to complete. Using RES Automation Manager we just initiate the job and the rest is handled automatically. Everything is installed within one hour. Our employees previously had to work late nights to execute comprehensive tasks on the servers, in order to minimize down-time.

Now, things are different.

"We have reduced late shifts dramatically. This is a big step forward, at least for me personally. RES Automation Manager has made the days easier for everyone in the department," Einen says. He explains that is easy to learn how RES Automation Manager works, spending only one day himself. All you need is the client installation, a module that defines the job and the tools to get started.

"The advantages are vast. The job is performed consistently and automatically on all the clients at the same time. Manually, you would have to process every client which makes you more prone to errors," he says. The processes get even easier by the fact that all tasks are managed through a simple user interface on a console.

The product is very efficient when it comes to eliminating administrator mistakes.

Such faults are not necessarily caused by lack of knowledge, but rather mistakes due to routine work. Repeating a task numerous times makes it simple and boring, which in turn often leads to

shortcuts and skipping procedures "since it worked so well in the past".

By automating these tasks, the municipality will have less downtime, more stable systems, less mundane tasks for the IT department and more happy users.



"I do not have to travel around installing, upgrading and do maintenance. Everything is done with the push of a button on the console in my office. Now we have more time available for system development and user support — which is great," Einen says.

Solution

SYSIKT has 30 servers installed. RES Automation Manager secures the fully automated execution so that every time a server is configured or reinstalled, it is done consistently. Using Wisdom, 20-30 servers can be installed by the time it takes to install a single machine manually.

The main server hosts the filing system, e-mail, geographic information systems, applications for the health and social services departments as well as financial software and case systems.

"Most people in the IT-business know that time is money, and that it is hard to recruit people. However, the problem is not that pressing anymore since we are more effective. Tasks that used to take hours are now completed in minutes," says Einen.

"Without RES Automation Manager we would need a lot more people to do the job properly, which would clearly have delayed other tasks," he says.

RES Automation Manager also makes it easier to locate errors on a server that is not working properly. By comparing the faulty server with servers that are running smoothly, it is simpler to identify the problem.

“I could have installed several servers in the time spent on his interview. That would not have been possible a year ago.”

—Frank Inge Einen, IT-consultant SYSIKT



Future Plans

When the old computers need replacements the municipality will make the transition to thin clients, which will be administrated by SYSIKT. All shared systems will be centralized, and only the internet and web based nongovernmental

services will be serviced locally. Everything should be in place by the end of 2009.

The school system will also be centralized and all students will receive usernames and passwords following them through their ten years of primary- and high school, even

if they swap schools within the district.

SYSIKT predicts to serve 6000 users by the time they launch the new streamlined internal school web.

About RES Software

RES Software, the proven leader in dynamic desktop solutions, is driving a transformation in the way organizations manage, maintain and reduce the cost of their desktop infrastructure. The RES Software award-winning, patented products enable IT professionals to manage and deliver secure, personalized and compliant desktops independent of the underlying computing infrastructure – thin clients, virtual desktops, physical desktops, or server-based computing environments. The company empowers customers, from small to medium-sized businesses to global enterprises, to reduce desktop complexity and meet the essential needs of a dynamic workforce that requires on-demand access to their personalized workspaces. For more information, follow updates on Twitter @RESSoftware and visit www.ressoftware.com.