

Standard Life optimizes system performance with the help of Microsoft

Overview

Country or Region: Canada

Industry: Insurance

Customer Profile

Standard Life is a leading company committed to providing a range of insurance, savings, investment and pension products.

Business Situation

Within eye on reducing technology complexity and streamline operations, Standard Life sought to enhance its IT server management and audit compliance capabilities.

Solution

The company upgraded to Microsoft System Center Operations Manager 2007 and Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager 2007 to improve infrastructure and server management.

Benefits

- Improved Centralized Management
- Improved IT Compliance and Audit Capabilities
- Improved Automation

“We liked the fact that System Center Operations Manager 2007 allowed us to develop a more proactive centralized management infrastructure for our server and other network device monitoring.”

Enzo Verni, Manager, Technology Services at Standard Life

The Standard Life Assurance Company of Canada is a leading provider of insurance, savings, investment and pension products. To improve IT operations and service delivery, Standard Life sought to enhance its network management and audit compliance capabilities. The company worked with Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner Itergy and upgraded to Microsoft® System Center Operations Manager 2007 and Microsoft® System Center Configuration Manager 2007. The Windows®-based management solutions functions as an integral part of Standard Life’s new IT environment. With the System Center-based platform in place, Standard Life is improving infrastructure and server management – helping to reduce overall complexity and boost productivity.

Situation

Helping customers grow and protect their assets is the principal mandate of The Standard Life Assurance Company of Canada. The Montreal-based insurance firm delivers a wide range of products and services – including group savings and retirement, group insurance, individual life insurance, and mutual funds and portfolio management – to more than 1.3 million customers across the country.

The company runs a highly dispersed and disparate IT environment, and its 2,200 employees routinely use a mix of Microsoft®-based and third-party business solutions. Deploying, managing and updating these disparate technologies, however, was becoming a time-consuming task. The IT department used several network monitoring solutions to track the health of the company's hardware and software, but none were able to provide a holistic view of Standard Life's operating environment. As a result, resolving day-to-day application performance issues took a great deal of manual effort. This made it increasingly difficult for staff to provide the service and application-level monitoring Standard Life staff needed to be productive. The IT department also wanted an easier way to track software assets and ease auditing and compliance processes.

"We have a highly complex environment that includes cross-platform applications, legacy technologies, multiple servers, you name it. Our business infrastructure was becoming fragmented and we wanted to streamline operations," says Enzo Verni, Manager, Technology Services, Standard Life.

Solution

Standard Life worked with Microsoft® Gold Certified partner, Itergy, to deploy Microsoft System Center Operations Manager 2007, a unified, end-to-end service management

solution designed for Microsoft and non-Microsoft-based environments.

System Center Operations Manager 2007 is part of Microsoft System Center, a suite of integrated business solutions and tools designed to improve application availability and enhance IT service delivery. "The solution provides Standard Life with an end-to-end monitoring environment that automates reporting, making it easy for staff to spot issues and take action," says Pavel Rybakov, Senior Consultant, Itergy.

For Standard Life, any unexpected hardware failures translate into huge productivity losses. Being able to use the end-to-end monitoring capabilities within System Center Operations Manager 2007 right out of the box was welcomed by the IT staff. Enhanced features such as intelligent reporting and monitoring make it easier for users to track the health and performance of the core operating system, memory and network interfaces across the organization. In addition, the ability to monitor multiple domains, remote branches or sites via a centralized console also helps IT departments maintain application service levels and plan for major deployments.

"The solution System Center Operations Manager 2007 allowed us to develop a more proactive, centralized management infrastructure for our servers and benefit from network device monitoring. We were able to quickly customize the product to suit our immediate and long-term needs," says Verni.

Benefits

System Center Operations Manager 2007 has helped Standard Life realize new efficiencies across the enterprise. Deploying the end-to-end monitoring solution in the data centre helps Standard Life ensure that IT services, applications and servers run more

efficiently and are meeting service levels for optimal uptime and responsiveness.

Greater automation

System Center Operations Manager 2007 includes a Web Console that allows IT staff to access the solution from any Web browser and conduct intelligent reporting and monitoring. This has saved the IT team valuable time while providing a more predictable IT environment.

“We now have better control of our IT environment. We are immediately notified if anyone attempts to download something to their PC or tries to alter their configuration, which helps us be more proactive in protecting our network,” says Verni. The time saved through System Centre Operations Manager 2007 has also helped Standard Life staff focus more of its resources on projects related to customer service.

Centralized management

Standard Life is using System Center Operations Manager 2007 to monitor its portfolio of servers, applications and client devices more efficiently and gain more control of the IT environment. Users can quickly view the health of specific application services across all hardware or operating systems, and proactively spot problems before they affect operations.

“Accessing a centralized console for end-to-end IT management allows Standard Life to cost-effectively consolidate data, helping us improve security, compliance and efficiency. This helps the company boost service levels while helping to significantly reduce its operational costs,” says Rybakov.

Improved compliance

System Center Operations Manager 2007 can also extract and collect security logs from Windows operating systems and store them

for later analysis and reporting in a separate Audit Collection database. Audit Collection can be used to produce various compliance and security analysis reports.

The role-based security features of System Center Operations Manager 2007 ensure that users have access to only the features they are authorized to use. In addition, by using the Configuration Manager feature, IT staff is able to have more up-to-date and accurate inventory of the hardware and software environment at all times.

“We conduct yearly audits on our server security and we’re better able to maintain and control the configurations of all our servers. And by adding more security and auditing functionality, we can minimize the likelihood of security breaches within our server architecture. We’re now more dynamic by being able to quickly identify potential system failures before they occur,” says Verni.

For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400. In Canada, call the Microsoft Canada Information Centre at (877) 568-2495. Customers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can reach Microsoft text telephone (TTY/TDD) services at (800) 892-5234 in the United States or (905) 568-9641 in Canada. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact your local Microsoft subsidiary. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to: www.microsoft.com

For more information about Itery products and services, call 514.845.5881 or visit the Web site at: <http://www.itergy.com>

For more information about Standard Life Standard Life Standard Life products and services, call 1-800-465-2581 or visit the Web site at: <http://www.standardlife.ca/en/>

Microsoft Server Product Portfolio

For more information about the Microsoft server product portfolio, go to: www.microsoft.com/servers/default.aspx

Software & Services

- System Center Operations Manager 2007

Partner

- Itery