

CASE STUDY – Internet

Out-of-Band Management Tools by Avocent Ease Deployment and Decrease Downtime



OVERVIEW

THUS offers a variety of voice, data and Internet solutions, the latter of which is sold mainly under the Demon brand in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. Demon is one of the U.K.'s largest Internet Service Providers (ISPs). Over the past several years it has expanded from two to 106 points of presence, serving 20 key business centers across the U.K.

As Demon grew, Cyclades® ACS advanced console servers enabled the company to decrease by half the time needed to deploy a U.K. wide 25-node Cisco MPLS network. "Its automatic documentation during the set up process gave staff the ability to configure the network from their desktops, eliminating several 700-mile round-trip visits to remote locations and other travel costs," said Matthew Willcock, Data Team Leader, National Engineering Resources - Field Operations.

Today Cyclades ACS console servers also help THUS network operations to run smoothly by quickly identifying and correcting between 60 and 70 percent of infrastructure incidents. THUS is able to monitor servers for potential problems, quickly obtaining critical information and securely managing systems from a single unified platform.

CHALLENGE

THUS faced three primary challenges:

- *Selling management on the business benefits of out-of-band management.*
A business case was developed that helped senior executives view out-of-band management as a fundamental way to increase operational efficiency and reduce costs.
- *Ensuring a secure, proactive solution to maximize IT asset availability.*
As the THUS network expanded and service level agreements (SLAs) required higher levels of uptime, it became increasingly important to be proactive to quickly identify potential problems that might jeopardize network availability. THUS also required logging of console access and server output. In addition, all functions had to be carried out with high security and encrypted traffic while keeping rack space usage to a minimum, and providing for both AC and DC powered environments.
- *Giving design teams the ability to quickly configure and deploy equipment at sites some distance from their base locations.*



PROFILE

Company
THUS Plc

Type of business
Communications

Corporate headquarters
Glasgow, Scotland, U.K.

Web site
www.thus.net
www.demon.net

Application
Deployment and management of IT assets across local and remote sites

"Cyclades ACS console servers were one of the only products that offered all the features we required. Because the technology is Linux-based and our staff is very familiar with Open Source, we had minimal training costs."

Matthew Willcock
Data Team Leader, National Engineering Resources – Field Operations
THUS plc

SOLUTION

After considering various products, THUS chose Avocent because it offered cost-efficiency, top-grade security, data logging capabilities, ease of configuration and compact size. It deployed a hybrid solution based on a nationwide dedicated management network using mainly a combination of Cyclades® ACS advanced console servers and Cyclades TS terminal servers.

The deployment at each location consisted of three phases. Using Cyclades ACS console server and a modem, THUS quickly and cost-effectively configured a management network without physically being on site. This network provided the out-of-band access to the console server, allowing the rest of the service network to be configured using Cyclades ACS console server. Finally, the out-of band network was handed over to operational teams to provide ongoing monitoring and remote management. To meet THUS' security requirements, Cyclades ACS console servers feature secure encryption and are managed by an existing management platform to allow logging and log processing.

ABOUT AVOCENT

Avocent delivers IT operations and infrastructure management solutions for enterprises worldwide, helping customers to reduce costs and simplify complex IT environments via integrated, centralized in-band and out-of-band hardware and software. Through LANDesk, Avocent also is a leading provider of systems, security, and process management solutions. Additional information is available at: www.avocent.com.

RESULTS

- Less time to deploy services
- Significant reduction in out-of-hours support and maintenance costs
- Reduced fault diagnostic and fix time due to faster problem analysis and solving
- Better uptime performance due to early warning of potential faults

“Without out-of-band access and Cyclades-branded products we could not be warned of incidents as quickly as we are. A single device in trouble could significantly affect service availability, so having immediate access is critical to maintaining service levels.”

Matthew Willcock
Data Team Leader, National Engineering Resources – Field Operations
THUS plc



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