Ipswitch accompanies renowned museum into the multimedia age

Deutsche Bergbau-Museum (German Mining Museum, DBM) in Bochum, Germany is the most prestigious museum of its kind worldwide, and also a renowned mining history research institute. Its 19 rooms offer visitors an in-depth look at global mining and the important role played by mineral resources from prehistoric times to the present. A comprehensive makeover with an entirely new design concept is transforming DBM with a variety of multimedia components. One highly visible example is a mining shaft simulator that gives visitors a highly realistic impression of descending in a pit cage to 1,200 meters below ground.

The job of supporting the museum’s ever more numerous monitors, information terminals and video walls belongs to René Schauf, the museum’s IT director. “We not only manage the network of 20 servers and some 200 staff computers, we also have to ensure that the network for the multimedia applications is available when the museum opens its doors to visitors,” he explains. The particular challenge here: “The IT team is only two people, counting me, so we need the highest possible level of automation to monitor the network.”

**Extensive testing of different products**

Full automation was not possible with the Windows system management tools that the IT director had been using to monitor the network. Together with IT systems firm P&W Netzwerk in Haltern-am-See, Germany, DBM sought out a suitable specialized network monitoring solution. Following in-depth testing of various products, they opted for WhatsUp Gold software from Ipswitch.
“WhatsUp Gold offers comprehensive functionality right out of the box,” IT Director Shauf says. “An establishment of our size only has a small business-sized IT budget, so WhatsUp Gold’s excellent cost-benefit ratio was a major criterion for our choice. Ipswitch’s licensing model also means that we pay only for the functions we really need. Another major advantage of the solution is its simple and intuitive usability that produces results very quickly.”

Prompt responses to threatened bottlenecks

Today, Deutsche Bergbau-Museum can view its entire network with WhatsUp Gold, including all connected devices. The system monitors network components such as servers and switches via SNMP, with ongoing assessment of their performance, and displays this information in dashboard panels. If critical threshold values — which can be freely defined and configured — are exceeded, WhatsUp Gold automatically sends out alerts. A colored indicator shows the current network availability status for each end device.

Using this analysis and early warning system, DBM can ensure that the network is always available to the multimedia applications. Every morning before the museum opens its doors to visitors, the DBM visitor service verifies the network status on control monitors, as shown in the photo below. If the indicator lights show looming bottlenecks or any threat of a multimedia...
application failure, the department immediately informs the museum’s technical support services. This team notifies the IT department if they cannot resolve the issue, so that timely action can be taken.

**WhatsUp Gold plays a key role**

None of this would be possible without the support of WhatsUp Gold. “Before, we couldn’t anticipate network problems, but only react to them when something had already failed. We didn’t have a proactive system for early warning,” says Schauf. “Today we can’t afford to work that way. With all the different multimedia applications, which are constantly expanding, we would never be able to put out multiple fires at the same time. So WhatsUp Gold plays a key role in our transition to a multimedia museum.”

Given his very positive experience, Schauf would not hesitate to recommend the system to others. “You can achieve results very quickly with the solution, without any unnecessary costs. Another very big advantage is that all IP-capable end devices can be integrated,” says the IT Director. This is why he plans to extend the solution in-house as well, and connect additional multimedia applications.
Deutsche Bergbau-Museum overview
http://www.bergbaumuseum.de/
Sector: Museums and research institutes
Challenge: Ensure network availability for a large number of multimedia applications
Solution: Ipswitch WhatsUp Gold
Benefits:
• Proactive management of threatened failures
• Assurance of multimedia operation during business hours
• Integration of all IP-capable end devices

WhatsUp Gold presents network availability graphically
Deutsche Bergbau-Museum uses the Ipswitch WhatsUp Gold monitoring solution to monitor network accessibility for its many multimedia applications. The system gives DBM time to respond to any threats of failure before visitors arrive.

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-René Schauf, IT Director
Deutsches Bergbau Museum Bochum