



SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN DISCOVERS THE VALUE OF WS_FTP SERVER

Case Study

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Company

Scientific American, Inc.

Industry

Media/Publishing

Business Challenge

Scientific American needed a way to securely move large, encrypted files around the world and to implement an email program that supported a predominantly Macintosh environment.

Outcome

Scientific American chose Ipswitch WS_FTP® Server for its secure data transfer needs and to ensure the integrity of its critical files. In addition, it added Ipswitch WhatsUp® for network performance reporting and Ipswitch IMail™ to support its international communication needs.

Company Background

Scientific American (www.sciam.com), the oldest continuously published magazine in the U.S., has been bringing its readers unique insights about developments in science and technology for more than 150 years. The magazine is translated into more than 15 foreign language editions and has more than 1,000,000 copies in circulation worldwide.

As a primarily Apple Macintosh-based shop, Roger Hirschkind, IT Director, was looking for products that were a good fit from a number of perspectives: ease of installation, worry-free maintenance, ensured security of data, functionality and price. Hirschkind first discovered WS_FTP Server for moving large files securely. When his needs required an email program that worked across platforms and various international user applications, as well as an application to monitor his network infrastructure, he naturally wanted to try Ipswitch products first.

What led Hirschkind to consider WS_FTP Server? After he had reviewed Microsoft's built-in FTP service and found it to be lacking in its security, reporting and administrative features, he researched other products. "We do business with several translated editions outside of the country," says Hirschkind. "At one time, we were sending them content which

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Roger Hirschkind
IT Director
Scientific American

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could be 400-500 MB at a time on CD, DVD or tape. We wanted to get content to them much quicker and these files are much too large for email. After I looked at Microsoft, I looked at Ipswitch. It was important that I knew who was coming in and what had been downloaded, and to be able to do some reporting on it. At the time Microsoft didn't offer that."

WS_FTP Server now offers a 256-bit AES encryption over SSL and SSH protocols to keep information confidential during transfer over the Internet. Plus, it offers built-in file integrity checking up to SHA-512 to guarantee delivery and ensure that files transferred have not been compromised. Now when a file transfer client downloads a file, they can verify that what they downloaded is everything they wanted and that it didn't change during the download. "For instance," says Hirschkind, "I could be downloading a file but you could be in the process of updating it, and by the time it finishes downloading it's already outdated. WS_FTP allows you to see that and make sure that you haven't downloaded a piece of it or an outdated version. So it's not just the security of the data, but also the integrity and the versioning."

Because Scientific American deals with vast amounts of information exchanged throughout the world on a monthly basis, they sometimes will reach the threshold of their own telecommunications capacity. "Our International Editions now download from our WS_FTP Server the content they previously received from us via CDs or DVDs. That's a good thing, but when you have that much information, you're maxing out the bandwidth," explains Hirschkind.

"Every once in a while, we would notice it was taxing the circuits. We would get emails from a country where they couldn't access our server." Scientific American needed a way to discover why a particular country wasn't able to get access to information. "When other countries have a problem, the WS_FTP Server logs are very good at explaining what happened with access." Additionally, the ability of the Ipswitch Notification Server to easily set up automatically sent email, SMS or pager alerts based on specified server events is extremely important. "I need the ability to be notified when certain things happen on the server: a download, who accessed the server, how many times, etcetera," says Hirschkind. "It can also tell me what files were uploaded or downloaded. I like to make sure that the translated editions got downloaded."

While Scientific American chose WS_FTP Server first, their comfort level with the product led them to subsequently choose IMail and WhatsUp. "Like their other products, IMail proved to be a great pick - it had all of the functionality we required and it worked right out of the box," says Hirschkind. "We also use WhatsUp Professional to monitor our

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routers, switches, firewalls, and servers. In fact, in all three cases, Ipswitch had solutions that turned out to be just as good and reliable as the previous one.”

“We’ve had the Ipswitch products installed for many years,” continues Hirschkind. “With email, the big boys are Microsoft Exchange and Outlook®. But one of the reasons we opted to not go that way is that we’re 75% Mac, and by no means is Exchange or Outlook easy to set up or maintain on the Mac. IMail was at the right price point, it’s easy to install, very easy to maintain, supports Safari browsers (Mac’s default browser) and the updates just work.”

Information technology specialists are constantly trying to balance project work with the day-to-day upkeep of the existing environment. The key to being successful is to be able to spend a minimum of time working on maintenance while maximizing the time spent on advancing the directives of the business. According to Hirschkind, the Ipswitch suite of products makes that easy. “From an IT point of view, if you’re properly installing a patch, you would indicate to all users that the patch will be installed after backing up the whole server and then be prepared to abort. Frankly, a lot of times you just cross your fingers and hope. With IMail and WS_FTP Server, I come in, run the patch, and that’s it. The patches take five or ten minutes to install. I don’t even have to let anyone know we’re doing it.”

Hirschkind also notes that what sets Ipswitch products apart is that they have a technical preview group. “When they’re working on a new release of something they allow the group to preview copies of the product to give feedback that is then incorporated - it shows that they really care what the client thinks. In some cases, companies wonder, ‘who beta tested this?’ In this case we know it’s us, the customer.”