Cutting Costs with Server Consolidation

How a U.S. Federal Agency Achieved Greater Performance, Efficiency, and Savings

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» Dealing with a Crowded Data Center

Faced with a growing fleet of servers to manage and a directive from above to cut costs, reduce energy consumption, and protect critical data, Jay—a Senior Network Architect for a federal agency—turned to a trusted IT partner for a server consolidation project to help him accomplish his IT objectives. Relying on valuable information gathered during a series of assessments, Jay implemented changes that reduced the complexity of the agency's data center, improved performance, and ensured reliable disaster recovery.

The Solution to Server Sprawl

As the data center expanded to meet increased IT demands, the agency's server sprawl reached a height of 255 servers across two data centers and several field sites. Jay knew that he had to consolidate those servers in order to meet a federal initiative to reduce energy consumption, while still delivering the performance his users expected. In addition, the agency wanted to implement a disaster recovery (DR) plan to safeguard critical data.

Building the Perfect Plan

Working with GovConnection, Jay decided to manage his server consolidation project in stages, starting in the primary data center and moving outward. GovConnection experts conducted several assessments, including a Server Assessment, Network Assessment, and Storage Assessment. Using this valuable information, Jay discovered which servers were good candidates for consolidation. "With the assessment we found out how much CPU and RAM and disk [our servers] were using," said Jay. "That gave us an idea of how many servers can be used—instead of the 15 or 16 servers out there in the field [we could] make it into one in our primary center."

From Assessments to Savings

Using the assessments as tools to better understand the agency's infrastructure, Jay was able to make informed decisions about his IT investments. "If we minimize the number of servers, we're going to be saving on storage space in our data center, power, and cooling," said Jay.

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Consolidating the 255 servers in the agency into 20 in the primary data center and 10 in the secondary data center, Jay was also able to free up his team to work on other tasks instead of managing servers spread out across multiple field sites. "The goal for [our field sites] was that they don't see any changes. Once we consolidated the servers, we wanted them to feel like the server is still there on their site—a seamless project."

Disaster Recovery Done Right

In addition to consolidating the agency's servers, GovConnection also set up replication between the primary and secondary sites. This had been on the agency's IT wish list for quite some time, but had never come to fruition. "Our Continuous Access Goal was to replicate critical data between our primary site and our secondary site," said Jay. "And that's something that our agency had been looking into for the last ten years. [With] this project on server consolidation, we're able to do that and management is really excited about it. Without the GovConnection team, I don't think we would have been able to accomplish the replication between the two sites. They were a big help for us."

The Expert Advantage

A team of GovConnection engineers worked on-site to help Jay accomplish the agency's IT goals quickly and effectively. From optimizing the network to ensuring there was enough storage available in the SAN, the GovConnection team acted as a resource for Jay and his IT staff. "They were really helpful, answering any questions we had," said Jay. "And the assessments they provided told us [about the infrastructure] we had in our field offices."

At the conclusion of the project, Jay saw significant cost savings—a result of fewer servers to manage and more efficient use of resources. Achieving a much smaller carbon footprint with a centralized data center and optimized network also enabled the agency to meet federal directives while delivering the performance users needed to complete their tasks

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» What's Your Server Scenario?

PC Connection's Server Assessment examines your existing IT environment and offers insights into your current inventory, system performance, and model consolidation ratios—so you will have a plan to optimize your data center. You will receive a customized report detailing:

- How your servers are performing today
- How your servers stack up against industry norms
- Specific ways to save money and lower your total cost of ownership

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