



Microsoft® Windows® Small Business Server 2003 Customer Solution Case Study



Overview

Country: United States

Industry: Community Services

Customer Profile

Aurora First Assembly, a thriving community church located in Aurora, Colorado, engages in an energetic ministry that includes extensive outreach programs, a daycare center, a K-12 school, and a substantial world-wide relief effort.

Business Situation

The church's IT infrastructure used Linux, Novell, and Microsoft® Windows® software and third-party line of business programs. This environment lacked consistent file management and adequate security for Internet and file access. The resulting network instability delayed the vital services that the staff needed to work efficiently and focus on community service.

Solution

Design Enterprises, a Denver-area Microsoft Certified Partner, deployed an office productivity and unified messaging platform based on Microsoft Windows Small Business Server 2003.

Benefits

- Consistent and reliable IT management
- Improved individual and group productivity
- Reduced IT support costs



Migrating from Linux and Novell Enables Church to Focus on Its Mission, Not Technology

“Our outreach programs are very important to what we do. The migration to Small Business Server [2003] has given us the results that really matter. Now, we can accomplish more than ever in our outreach programs.”

Eugene Roncone, Head Pastor, Aurora First Assembly Church

Aurora First Assembly Church migrated its Linux- and Novell-based client-server network to one based on Microsoft® Windows® Small Business Server 2003 when a hacker attack, unauthorized access to church files, and numerous service interruptions made it clear that the mixed IT infrastructure had reached the end of its useful life.

The new Windows-based infrastructure provides the church with more secure and reliable network operation, remote network monitoring tools that simplifies third-party IT support, and unified messaging and scheduling capabilities that help both the pastors and the office staff to work more productively.

Specific benefits include:

- Office staff productivity increased by 65 percent.
- Hacker intrusions, unauthorized file access, and network downtime were virtually eliminated.
- Senior staff productivity and quality of life were improved by the ability to work remotely from home.



“We were impressed that [Windows] Small Business Server 2003 provides a software firewall, a world-class data management system, and network monitoring tools and connectivity components that enable Frank [Clark] to help us keep our IT issues and expenses under control.”

Gene Roncone
Head Pastor
Aurora First Assembly Church

Situation

The Aurora First Assembly Church, a thriving church located in Aurora Colorado, strives to promote the social and spiritual health of its congregation and the surrounding community. Led by Head Pastor Gene Roncone, the pastors and staff have established an energetic spirit of support and caring for their congregation and the local community. This spirit infuses the church's ministry, extensive domestic and international outreach programs, a daycare center, and a K-12 school.

Aurora First Assembly's information technology (IT) infrastructure plays an important part in supporting the church's mission. However, the church's mixed computing environment, comprised of an ad hoc mix of Linux, Novell, and Microsoft® Windows® technologies, caused service interruptions that distracted staff members from their core duties.

The infrastructure also lacked reliable security, group messaging, and group scheduling capabilities that the staff needed to work more productively. The Linux components of the infrastructure, chosen initially to keep software costs low and system administration simple, no longer provided vital services the staff needed to work efficiently. These problems had two root causes.

Mixed computing environment. The church's network used both Novell and Linux network operating systems, several versions of the Microsoft Windows operating system on the PC desktop, and specialized line of business applications to run e-mail and accounting applications. The lack of integration of these diverse components made the system difficult and time-consuming for the church's inhouse IT expert to maintain. Members of the church office staff were forced to switch between Novell and Linux operating systems to complete basic administrative tasks.

Fragmented IT infrastructure. The church's IT infrastructure was designed in five independently operated Linux domains, each of which supported a different set of outreach, front-office, or school administration functions. The lack of centralized security and inconsistent file management practices made the church vulnerable to an external electronic hacker attack and unauthorized internal access to files stored on the network.

Managing this disparate system drained time, money, and attention from the church's focus of serving the local and international community. Previously, church officials, who focused their attention on non-IT issues, just wanted a computer system that worked. The technology-savvy Pastor Roncone, however, encouraged church officials to look at the bigger picture and define an IT system that could support church goals and activities now and in the future.

Solution

Frank Clark, owner of Design Enterprises, a Denver-area networking consultant and Microsoft Certified Partner, is currently the church's go-to guy for expert IT planning advice and ongoing network administration services. He began his relationship with Aurora First Assembly by working with Thom Taylor, a pastor and teacher at the church, who served as the resident systems administrator. Pastor Taylor worked with Mr. Clark to simplify and modernize the church's IT infrastructure.

Both men knew that the church's decision to use Linux more than 5 years ago was made because the no-cost licensing fee appeared to keep IT costs low. Initially, Pastor Taylor considered moving to a system based on Microsoft Windows Server™ 2003 and Microsoft Exchange Server 2003 because it would provide more secure and reliable file



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Myra Beals
Office Manager
Aurora First Assembly Church

and print services, Internet connectivity, and unified messaging and scheduling capabilities. However, Mr. Clark, who was part of the beta testing of Microsoft Windows Small Business Server 2003, was aware of its pending release and persuaded church officials to wait.

Pastor Roncone explains, "Frank suggested we wait for Windows Small Business Server 2003 because it not only provides Windows [Server 2003] and Exchange [Server 2003] as integrated components, but also because it provides additional capabilities at essentially no additional cost. We were impressed that [Windows] Small Business Server 2003 provides a software firewall, a world-class data management system, as well as network monitoring tools and connectivity components that will enable Frank to help us keep our IT issues and expenses under control. When we realized that this additional functionality could help us be more productive in our church operations and our mission, we decided that the wait would be worth it."

A Reliable Hosting Platform

Mr. Clark started the migration by moving the IT infrastructure to a more reliable platform. He installed Windows Small Business Server 2003 on a new Intel Architecture-based Pentium 4 server. The Windows Server™ 2003 operating system, a component of Windows Small Business Server 2003, provided reliable, scalable infrastructure services that the church could depend on now and as demands on the system grow.

Remote network monitoring tools built into Windows Small Business Server 2003 enable Mr. Clark to receive automatic e-mail messages that provide regular updates of network status, perform break-and-fix operations from his

office, and address networking issues before they become serious problems.

A Simpler, More Secure Infrastructure

Next, Mr. Clark simplified the system architecture by creating a single domain managed by the Active Directory® directory service of Windows Server 2003. He grouped 35 desktop computers in the church and school offices into a multi-server Church site, which provides file and print, messaging, accounting, network administration services, and improved security. A single-server School site will soon support the 20 desktop PCs of the school's computer laboratory environment.

Windows Small Business Server 2003 Premium Edition includes Microsoft Internet Security and Acceleration Server 2000 (ISA), which enabled Mr. Clark to set up a software firewall. This solution provides Aurora First Assembly with a more reliable and robust connection to the Internet and the advanced security and event logging of a proven, industry-recognized product.

Next, Mr. Clark familiarized church officials and staff with the advantages of controlling file access by using Windows Server 2003 Group Policy. Policy-based capabilities enable church officials to base access privileges on specific roles of staff members. The centralized management capabilities of Active Directory ensure that these privileges are enforced consistently throughout the church's IT assets.

Integrated Productivity Applications

Mr. Clark also installed the Microsoft Exchange Server 2003 component of Windows Small Business Server 2003 to provide the church with unified messaging services, which include internal and external e-mail and group scheduling capabilities.



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Myra Beals
Office Manager
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Benefits: Working Smarter and Faster

Migrating to a computing environment based completely on Windows Small Business Server 2003 enables the pastors and staff of Aurora First Assembly to work more efficiently, secure the church's electronic and network-related resources more securely, and operate the church's IT network more cost-effectively. By reducing the distractions of an unstable computer network, Aurora First Assembly's Small Business Server 2003-based solution helps pastors and staff to work faster and smarter and focus on their mission, serving the local community.

Office Staff Productivity Improved by 65 Percent

The stable, integrated network environment provided by Windows Small Business Server 2003 virtually eliminated the service interruptions, security problems, and the need to switch between operating systems. These improvements led to increased system availability, employee productivity, and an end to the office staff's IT-related frustrations.

Myra Beals, Office Manager at Aurora First Assembly Church, describes the estimated 65-percent improvement in personal productivity for the office staff that the solution provided, saying, "Changing over to our new computer system has made a vast improvement in reducing interruptions in our work. Now, instead of chasing down information or waiting for the network to come back up, the 40 end users on our staff can accomplish what must be done and start working on special projects we never could get to previously. Our new network enables each member of our office staff to recover one and a half hours per day previously lost to delays and downtime. That's real productivity savings."

Efficient, Unified Messaging and Group Scheduling

By providing each staff member with an individual e-mail address and related messaging capabilities, the Microsoft Office Outlook® 2003 messaging and collaboration client, in conjunction with the Exchange Server 2003 component of Windows Small Business Server 2003, will help all church staff members to stay better informed of each other's activities and spend less time and effort coordinating schedules and organizing meetings and group events.

Work Remotely from Home

A more stable Internet environment and the planned deployment of the Remote Web Workplace capability of Windows Small Business Server 2003 will enable the church pastors and business manager to work on church business when they are out of the office. By using secure Internet connections from their homes, senior staff members can read their e-mail, retrieve files on their church office desktop PC, and work together in collaborative workspaces without traveling back to the church. Saving the drive time to and from the church to pick up files and working from a comfortable environment at home will enable the staff to spend more time with their families and make it easier to work an estimated 14 hours more each week, thereby providing additional value to the church and community.

Reduced IT Management Effort

A simplified domain structure and remote network monitoring capabilities of Windows Small Business Server 2003 makes it easier to keep the church's network running. Less time and effort spent in routine administrative tasks and more consistent, reliable IT management will help the church control IT costs and enable Mr. Clark to

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For more information about Design Enterprises products and services, call (303) 575-1082 or visit the Web site at: <http://www.designent.com>.

For more information about Aurora First Assembly Church, call (303) 366-2603 or visit the website at <http://www.aurorafirst.org>.

spend more time expanding the Small Business Server portion of his consulting practice.

Mr. Clark comments, "Even before the deployment was complete, we started getting positive feedback from the office staff, and complaints about the up-again, down-again network have virtually ceased. I attribute that to the fact that the system is more stable, more structured, and requires far less attention than before."

Pastor Roncone concludes, "Our outreach programs are very important to what we do. The migration to Small Business Server [2003] has given us the results that really matter. Now, we can accomplish more than ever in our outreach programs and operate more efficiently than we could have ever imagined. As the first-stage deployment is completed, the church staff and I will be able to concentrate on what we do best, focusing on our mission and serving the community."

Windows Small Business Server 2003

Microsoft® Windows® Small Business Server 2003 enables your small business to be more productive with fewer resources. Now you can: Automatically protect your business information in 15 essential ways; Get 20% more done every day by making it easier for your employees to find, share, communicate, and remotely access information; Reach more customers and serve them better, 24/7; Quickly set up and easily operate a Windows-based server to run your small business.

For more information about Windows Small Business Server 2003, please visit <http://www.microsoft.com/sbserver>.

Software and Services

■ Products

- Microsoft Windows Small Business Server 2003, Premium Edition
- Microsoft Windows Server 2003
- Microsoft Exchange Server 2003
- Microsoft Internet Security and Acceleration Server 2000
- Microsoft SQL Server™ 2000

- Microsoft Windows XP Professional
- Technologies
 - Microsoft Active Directory
 - Microsoft Windows SharePoint™ Team Services

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