



Administrator worries vanish, thanks to e-mail compression

Reckitt Benckiser plc is the \$5bn merger of Reckitt & Colman plc and Benckiser N.V. The Company has a lean, flat organizational structure with a true workgroup environment. Many of the group's projects are planned and executed by task forces drawn from different Reckitt Benckiser companies around the world. In addition the international management team can spend 75% of their time on the road and therefore the Company relies heavily on communication, via Microsoft Exchange Server and Outlook 98.

One of the key benefits of the Reckitt Benckiser communications infrastructure is the ability to exchange documents by attaching them to e-mail messages. This is especially important for the large number of users who are downloading e-mail remotely, with files attached, from international hotels and mobile phone links. However, these methods of communication carry a heavy call charge premium and the pre-merger Benckiser organization looked for a way to reduce download times – and therefore costs – for remote users.

The technology team first discovered MaX Compression when it was a subject of discussion in an Exchange-focused electronic newsgroup. Gunar Braaf, Manager – Enterprise Architecture Information Services in London takes up the story:

“We had seen a lot of positive comments and recommendations for MaX Compression on e-mail discussion groups and consultant’s reports and we thought it may help provide an answer to our increasing bandwidth and communication costs”.

“We considered using a conventional compression tool like WinZip but we would have had to rely on users to compress the files before they sent them, which they don’t always remember or bother to do. MaX Compression would automate the process and give the Exchange administrator control over compression settings.”

Testing Times

The corporate IS team downloaded MaX Compression from C2C’s website and began an evaluation programme. Testing showed that they could indeed achieve reduced download times for remote e-mail users and, equally importantly for the whole organisation, reduce the overall e-mail traffic level to free up network bandwidth. This would result in faster communication times across the corporate network and more efficient use of existing bandwidth, deferring expensive bandwidth upgrades.

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Gunar Braaf continues: “MaX Compression soon became part of the Standard Desktop, but as the merger happened it soon became clear that the benefits of MaX Compression would be of immense value to the whole organisation and it became an integral part of the merged network. As we migrated the Reckitt & Colman cc:Mail base to the more flexible Microsoft Exchange architecture we defined MaX Compression as a global standard and implemented it on all desktops in conjunction with the Exchange project”.

At present Reckitt Benckiser has approximately 113 Exchange Servers deployed and about 8600 e-mail compression users in the Exchange network. They have just finished the migration from cc:Mail to Microsoft Exchange, which although technically challenging to start with, was well planned and executed without major problems. The deployment is truly global, stretching out to 56 countries around the world.

The implementation of MaX Compression version 4.2.5 is fully up and running. “The deployment has been straightforward with a couple of minor installation issues being easily resolved by the C2C support team. We therefore managed to meet our projected timescales and budget”, Braaf says.

Traveling Light

The principal benefit to Reckitt Benckiser of using MaX Compression has been the reduced download time and associated costs for traveling users. After tests, the technology team has achieved a time saving improvement in some cases of 50%. The timesavings have been recognised by the group’s executive management, which reflects well on the IS department’s decision to invest in the software.

Merger Means More Messaging

Another major benefit has been the reduced network bandwidth needed for e-mail traffic but this is really an added bonus for Reckitt Benckiser. Braaf explains, “By automatically zipping attachments we have seen an estimated 30% decrease in average message size across the network, this has given us more breathing space in the continued demand for global bandwidth. As the Company has grown, the savings have and will become larger.”

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