CASE STUDY

Scalable and unified monitoring is a top priority for Nijhof-Wassink Groep

"We wanted a product that can grow with the company, measure availability and not just statuses, provide good usability and pinpoint any problems."

Gerrit Otten, IT Manager, Nijhof-Wassink Groep

A SCALABLE SOLUTION FOR RAPID EXPANSION

Nijhof-Wassink has been a mainstay of the bulk transportation industry in Europe since 1967 and is a truly international company with over 1100 employees working at branches in the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Poland and Hungary. In addition to transportation, they also specialize in a number of logistical solutions such as storage and cleaning, and as a result, they offer a widely varied list of services to their customers internationally.

Recent expansion for the company in 2014 resulted in the opening of a second data center in Holland and the construction of a data center in Poland, in addition to their main centralized IT environment.

"With the expansion, we've had to rethink our environment and the entire purpose of our IT infrastructure," explains IT Manager Gerrit Otten. "We needed a monitoring solution that is flexible and we wanted to be able to go a step further and verify that the end usage of our service is working. We wanted good alerting and reporting too."

When combining two completely separate environments, many challenges arose in the integration process. A consultant from the op5 Professional Services team stepped in with a customized solution and set up an entirely new monitoring system from the bottom up, using op5 Monitor Enterprise+.

RELIABILITY COMES FIRST FOR NIJHOF-WASSINK

As a vital part of their customers' operations, being able to reliably offer the highest quality service is a top priority for Nijhof-Wassink. They must assure both stability and dependability in the entirety of their business, and when it comes to their data centers and online services, excellent performance and availability are absolute necessities. Outages or downtime can cause a lot of damage not only to Nijhof-Wassink but also the customers that are depending on their services.

"Due to bad monitoring we experienced an unacceptable amount of outages, our servers were going down without anyone realizing it which is when we decided to invest in better monitoring," says Mr. Otten. "We needed to know that our Transport Management Solution was working and that data was flowing to the correct interfaces, and we wanted to be able to pinpoint where a problem was located as soon as it happened."

The previous monitoring tool used at Nijhof-Wassink was a closed source solution that was capable of doing a few varied tasks but was impossible to customize and ran on an unreliable engine. When looking for a new option, they prioritized simplicity and flexibility, two aspects that aren't usually compatible when it comes to software. They needed a powerful tool that was also easily configured and could grow with the company. In the evaluation process, Mr. Otten came across the free demo version of op5 Monitor and found that it was capable of doing everything Nijhof-Wassink required and more.

SCALABLE MONITORING THAT GROWS WITH THE ENTERPRISE

With a bigger environment and quicker growth, it became more and more important to have a monitoring solution that could scale out as much as needed. When the number of reports, analyses and alerts grow exponentially, sysadmins and other IT employees require concise but comprehensive overviews to be able to proactively prevent downtime or other issues. op5 Monitor provides an excellent unified view of all monitored objects but also allows the user to drill down as needed. For Nijhof-Wassink, the installation of op5 Monitor Enterprise+ during the process of integrating their two data centers was perfectly timed.

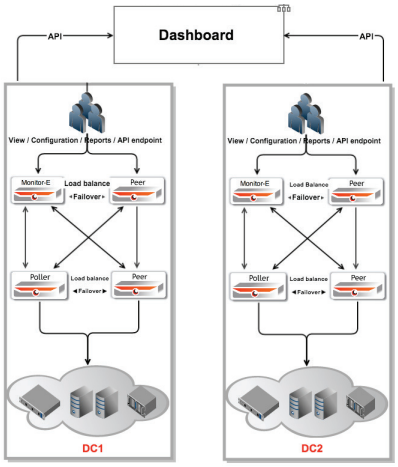
"The solution as it stands now is this: we have two data centers, both running in production, so we split the load over both. This means that we have two monitoring services, one in each, and they're working together in redundancy. We've also set up the log server for correlation of events, traps to receive info from the network, SMS notifications and temperature sensors with probes," explains Mr. Otten.

CONTINUOUSLY BENEFITING FROM FLEXIBILITY

In the future, Mr. Otten wants to expand their monitoring even further in the organization, so they require a flexible monitoring tool that can be adapted to the needs of their sister companies as well. They want to continue to prioritize monitoring as the vital linchpin that holds their business together. Digging down into application monitoring is also a future goal - this will allow them to fully monitor a business-critical 3rd party program called Transport Management Solution which consists of multiple applications coordinating their shipping system.

"Our monitoring solution has to be easily automated and integrate well with all the third party tools we use now. Access to good support and consulting is a must, which is one of op5's biggest strengths," says Mr. Otten. "We were consistently impressed with our op5 consultant. He was able to provide us exactly what we needed by thinking outside the box and coming up with great solutions. He's a fantastic resource at op5."

Gerrit Otten, IT Manager, Nijhof-Wassink Group



CHALLENGE:

Rapid expansion within the company added a lot of increased uptime demands on their data centers, needed a new system to handle a growing userbase without expanding their IT department drastically.

OP5 SOLUTION:

op5 Monitor Enterprise +, a product that could grow with the company while still providing stable and accurate monitoring with good overviews and usability.

RESULT:

A flexible and scalable monitoring system that is easily automated but integrates perfectly with all the 3rd party tools currently in place, with access to great support and consulting.

ABOUT OP5 AB

op5 offers server-monitoring solutions that help IT gain control over their operations and deliver IT-services for better business. op5 monitors everything from small but business critical IT environments to the very largest organizations with distributed hardware, applications and services. op5 customers around the world appreciate fully supported solutions that are open and easy to get started with, yet flexible for future needs.
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