

RAVN Manage transforms the Management of DLA Piper's Search Infrastructure



RAVN Systems' unparalleled solution, RAVN Manage, delivers efficiencies and confidence to DLA Piper in ensuring the wellbeing of their critical search-based applications.

Situation

DLA Piper is a leading global law firm with 4200 lawyers located in more than 30 countries throughout the Americas, Asia Pacific, Europe and the Middle East, positioning it to help companies with their legal needs anywhere in the world. Operationally there are 2 entities; DLA Piper International LLP, which includes Europe, Middle East and Asia Pacific and DLA Piper LLP (US), which serves North America. DLA Piper has deployed significant HP Autonomy iManage WorkSite installations across their regions, as their chosen Document Management System (DMS), which provides the electronic content management capability for all operational and 'Know How' content. The platform is powered by the HP Autonomy IDOL engine, providing the indexing and search technology for locating DMS content. Operational management of the system had been entirely manual and often reactive, through the use of internal resources.

Challenges

When speaking with Mubashir Mian, Lead Systems Specialist at DLA Piper UK he explained, "The management of the Search Platform was extremely time consuming. Due to the size and complexity of the worksite indexer (IDOL) the team had to become experts in the system to gain sufficient in-depth knowledge to resolve the many issues. And there never seemed to be the same resolution twice, so it was difficult to learn from this process."

The system itself was also inadequate when it came to detecting failures. Mubashir commented, "When one or more vital component in the Search environment failed to perform, it would often go unnoticed for several weeks until manual checks had been carried out, or worse still, when the business came to us with difficulties locating content. These checks became time consuming in themselves, but when you then include root cause identification, rectification of the failures and any legacy issues they may have left, the team was detracted from advancing other IT projects in the business".

In addition to tracking errors and failures, the on-going maintenance tasks for ensuring business continuity and Disaster Recovery capabilities were challenging and a significant further demand on resources.

The two operating businesses had discrete teams supporting their DMS implementations but there was commonality in the issues they were both experiencing with the iManage environment. Both teams wanted a solution that was “light and easy” that could monitor large, complex and geographically dispersed environments as a unified solution, which is where RAVN Manage delivers.

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Solution

DLA Piper needed an effective method of ensuring the wellbeing of their mission critical DMS platform. They were introduced to the RAVN Manage solution and the embedded expertise and experience in HP Autonomy solutions that RAVN Systems has.

RAVN Manage was evaluated across the DLA Piper International business unit and found to meet and exceed their requirements. The system was seamlessly installed in August 2012 and has since benefited from additional functionality with several upgrades. On these occasions there were no disruptions to their working environment.

All components of the global search infrastructure within HP Autonomy iManage are now being monitored by RAVN Manage, from the ingestion process right through to search queries. Crucially, it is the behavior of each component that is checked, based on learned experience of how each should respond, rather than reliance on the service status, which may report services as ‘running’, when in fact they have failed ‘silently’.

Result

RAVN’s Manage solution allows DLA Piper to effectively monitor their Search environment, meaning they no longer have to manually check the system is running correctly, which saves them time, effort, infrastructure cost and resource. It also delivers confidence in the DMS system. Mubashir commented, “We now feel confident in the operation

of the DMS system and rely on RAVN Manage to monitor the entire system. The early alerting features have given us higher visibility to problems meaning we can tackle them early on and even pre-empt some problems”.

Mubashir added, “RAVN Manage removes the possibility of human errors when checking the platform. Service variables are being tracked and recorded, statistics are gathered and log output from critical components is constantly checked. If problems are detected and reported by RAVN Manage, the administrator can take action using the product’s consolidated dashboard, making it unnecessary to have a massive amount of remote connections open to our global server estate.”

Although the solution is centralised, the interface and provision of zoned views is of great benefit to DLA Piper, allowing colleagues globally to share visibility in to the architecture and status of the system and to provide ‘follow the sun’ support. Mubashir also highlighted the value of installing a small footprint RAVN Proxy component on each server, which allows control of the IDOL services. RAVN Manage had highlighted problems with background maintenance tasks, which would most likely only have come to light in a fail-over situation. Now thanks to RAVN Proxy, overnight IDOL compaction, synchronisation and mirroring jobs are initiated and monitored by RAVN Manage, with any issues being reported as alerts in the morning.

When asking Mubashir what it would be like without RAVN Manage he commented, “Life without RAVN Manage would mean we’d have to go back to being more reactive and our peace of mind would disappear. Our DMS environment is key to our business and its essential that this is running correctly, to allow global information to be found and leveraged so we can handle matters efficiently.”

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