

 gkv informatik

Centralization of DDI services – gkv informatik relies on Global Architecture Management



Project Type:

- IPAM and DHCP management optimisation
- New DNS solution integration

Key Benefits:

- Time Savings
- Reduce labour-intensive administration tasks
- User-friendly interface

EfficientIP supports IT service provider for statutory health insurances in a comprehensive project to standardize crucial data services.

The step-by-step implementation of a complete and powerful DDI solution is one of the categories of IT projects that provide users with a number of significant benefits: these include time savings, reduced administrative overhead, user-friendliness, and easy application, to name a few. These are reason enough to take a closer look at the very successful flagship project that gkv informatik undertook with EfficientIP.

“We received valuable support from EfficientIP experts, especially in the planning phase, and during the integration of their new DNS server solution.”

Michael Jagla, IT Architect

gkv informatik was founded in April 2006, and today is one of the largest data centres and Europe's leading IT service provider in the statutory health insurance market. In addition to ensuring the quality of the IT services offered by roughly 850 employees at 30 locations, their range of tasks also includes modern telecommunications services for more than 44,000 terminals as well as 16 inbound and outbound call centre solutions. As the operator of one of the largest European VoIP networks, on whose high-value services many users depend, gkv informatik decided to centralize the DDI management infrastructure at its main site in Wuppertal.

In 2011, the company began looking for an IP address management (IPAM) solution to eliminate the need to manage an almost incomprehensible number of networks using Excel spreadsheets. The rapidly growing demand for IP addresses within the network, in conjunction with the time-consuming and error-prone administration via Excel lists, ensured that the old method was no longer manageable and needed a new, powerful solution for IPAM. A further optimization requirement concerned management of DHCP services, which at that time was still performed via separate servers in each individual office. This approach significantly aggravated the problem of providing and covering the services required with the scarce IT resources available, which resulted in an urgent need for rationalization of DHCP Management. Working with the solution provider EfficientIP, an architectural design was created, characterized by low implementation complexity, a low risk of misconfiguration, and a measurable reduction in administrative effort and costs. The goal was a uniform IP and DHCP management system to map the network structure and to properly migrate 3,000 subnets. Another great success for gkvi. In the meantime, both the IP centralization and the DHCP project have been completed. It has provided proven unified management of IP resources in the form of one-click deployment through interactions of the individual modules. In addition, 100,000 devices are operated both dynamically and statically from the Wuppertal headquarters.

A new strategy for DNS services

Further down the process, gkv informatik was very keen on introducing the topic of DNS services in the centralization strategy. At first, there were still different solutions in use, which were handled by different specialist teams within the company without clearly defined responsibilities. After a powerful centralized solution was found (once again together with EfficientIP in 2015), the first task was to gain an overview of the resulting IT landscape and gradually tackle the migration.

«One of the core tasks of the migration is to increase the number of existing DNS zones to a centralized solution while at the same time performing a clean-up», explains Michael Jagla, IT Architect at gkv informatik. «From a technical point of view, only a few clicks are required - the real challenge is to strategically anticipate how the system structure is arranged, what impact the changes will have, and how downtime can be prevented. We received valuable support from EfficientIP experts, especially in the planning phase, and during the integration of their new DNS server solution».

Long-term focus on process efficiency

The gkv informatik decision makers were convinced by the SOLIDserver™ solution itself - it not only allowed a smooth migration through a mixed architecture and would replace the existing DNS servers in the long term, but equally that EfficientIP would support the existing Microsoft, BIND and ISC solutions. Currently, the migration is about 50 percent complete within the framework of the DNS project. The long-term objective envisages not only being able to integrate the existing DNS servers into the EfficientIP management interface and to initiate actions from a central point, but also to switch off the old DNS servers, stopping the DNS service and slimming down the system. The 200 DNS servers to be replaced include 70 name zones and 3,000 reverse zones. The integrated security mechanisms of the EfficientIP solution are also highly valued - especially with regard to the DNS service, where effective protection against critical network threats plays an important role.



In addition to the reduction of several hundred servers and the associated cost savings, the future-proof DDI solution rates highly as a whole through its uncomplicated expandability and scalability, and is achieving a high degree of acceptance among the employees- in particular, the web-based access interface which ensures easy handling. The comparatively large number of users who work daily with the system (for example at the service desk or in the server area) can quickly run evaluations and obtain a detailed live image of the environment. All employees can use a real-time IP address to find out, for instance, what other information is involved - from the client to the MAC address to the office from which they last reported. Furthermore, the SOAP and REST interfaces that are available provide a way to configure and operate SOLIDserver from other tools, such as an asset database. This enables a high degree of automation and streamlines certain work steps.

«What makes the product so powerful, of course, is the massive simplification of the processes and administration», Jajla summarizes. «We wanted a single DDI solution for multiple services - DHCP, DNS and IP address management. So an access interface through which you have extensive control with just one click. Without EfficientIP's proposed solution we would only have been able to reach our goal at great expense». In the future, gkv informatik is planning a version upgrade for the current year (2017) as well as testing the use of EfficientIP products in the Azure Cloud.



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As one of the world's fastest growing DDI vendors, EfficientIP helps organizations drive business efficiency through agile, secure and reliable network infrastructures. Our unified management framework for DNS-DHCP-IPAM (DDI) and network configurations ensures end-to-end visibility, consistency control and advanced automation. Additionally, our unique 360° DNS security solution protects data confidentiality and application access from anywhere at any time. Companies rely on us to help control the risks and reduce the complexity of challenges they face with modern key IT initiatives such as cloud applications, virtualization, and mobility. Institutions across a variety of industries and government sectors worldwide rely on our offerings to assure business continuity, reduce operating costs and increase the management efficiency of their network and security teams.

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