

Law Firm Pronounces Judgment: Windows Server 2003 Reduces Costs, Saves Money

Published: April 2003



Industry: Legal

Boone Smith ran its overtaxed network on Windows NT 4.0. The network could no longer keep up with updated third-party software, security requirements, and performance goals. By migrating to Windows Server 2003, they dramatically increased file and print speed, reduced help desk calls by 20%, and anticipate decreased administrative costs.

Business Need: Improve performance, reduce costs

Network servers were getting slow and unreliable – the older software just couldn't keep up with newer applications, security and management requirements, and increased Internet usage. Migration and replacement was the only reasonable option.

Company Overview

Founded in the 1920's, Boone, Smith, Davis, Hurst & Dickman (Boone Smith) is one of the oldest and most established law firms in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The founding philosophy was simple: Quickly determine what the client needs, move swiftly, efficiently and get results. That philosophy continues to distinguish the firm today. The medium-sized firm of twenty attorneys enjoys an excellent reputation for providing high-quality legal services to major corporations, businesses and individuals, whether local, national or international.

Solution: Migrate to Windows Server 2003

By migrating to Microsoft® Windows® Server 2003, network, server, and security administration became fast and painless. File and print services are faster, and centralized administration of common administration tasks allows customers to save money.

Situation

Boone Smith relied on its rapidly aging Microsoft® Windows NT® 4.0 infrastructure for network, security and Internet access services. Although Windows NT 4.0 was suitable several years ago, it was not able to keep up with new software requirements or security regulations brought about by recent legislation such as HIPAA. Like most law firms, Boone Smith is document-centric, requiring fast, stable, secure access to documents and templates, also fast, responsive, flexible printing capabilities. Third-party software upgrades were overtaxing the network infrastructure, and calls about workstation-related issues were consuming 80% of the available help desk time.

Benefits

- 50% reduction in administrative and help desk time
- \$20,000 projected annual savings in system administration costs
- \$5,000 projected annual savings in remote management costs
- Up to 80% faster file and print services across the network
- Flexible, easy-to-administer security

Because Windows NT 4.0 was reaching its end of life, Boone Smith looked to other Windows® Server products as upgrade options. Windows 2000 Server was considered and discarded for two reasons: first, there was greater emphasis on security and faster performance in Windows Server 2003; and second, there was a much longer lifecycle available – five to seven years with 2003 versus only two for Windows 2000 Server.

With these considerations in mind, Boone Smith directed its outsourcing partner, CTS, to plan and prepare for a firm-wide upgrade to Windows Server 2003. CTS helped Boone Smith migrate from Novell NetWare to Windows NT Server, and they have partnered with Boone Smith since 1998 to improve business and reduce costs.

Solution

Over a long weekend, one existing server was upgraded and two new servers were installed. Server data, user data, and logon scripts and printer queues were migrated over into Active Directory® directory service. Security boundaries were set up to match practice areas within the law firm. A Web server and firewall were also set up and deployed on the law firm's Internet connection. This process allowed Boone Smith to retain all existing security while having a clean installation of Microsoft Windows Server 2003 setup. In addition, there was no downtime for users during the installation process; the majority of installation issues were remedied during the weekend without affecting business. Server upgrade and migration for all the servers took approximately five hours; design, implementation, and training administrators on the new software took approximately 5 days; the total project time including delivery of new equipment and software was approximately one month.

Benefits

Microsoft Windows Server 2003 provides dramatic speed improvements. Boone Smith experienced immediate file and print speed improvements when working with documents across the network. Documents that were taking up to 10 seconds to open now open within 1 to 2 seconds. All the needed printer drivers were included with the server, even for Boone Smith's high-end printer-copiers. Internet browsing speeds appear to have almost doubled and website changes now take about 15 seconds to publish compared to a minimum of 5 minutes before the installation.

Security and network management has likewise dramatically improved. Instead of using five different tools within Windows NT, Active Directory network, security, and server management is contained within a single tool. This speeds up training and responsiveness for support personnel, improving administration time by over 50% and the anticipated savings is an estimated \$20,000 per year.

Also welcome by both Boone Smith and CTS is the Remote Administration Console that allows administrators to provide support without having to physically go into the server room. Because CTS can administer servers remotely, a site visit billed in one-hour minimum increments is reduced to a 15-minute billable segment, saving an estimated \$5,000 per year.

Conclusion

By migrating to Windows Server 2003, Boone Smith moves up to a simple yet powerful management system that provides domain and server management tools and a consistent, effective management infrastructure.

For More Information

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For more information about CTS products and services, call (918) 622-1167 Option 3 or visit the Web site at: <http://www.ctshq.com>

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"The Windows Server 2003 migration was amazingly smooth. Our file access and Internet speed have nearly doubled and use of the new remote administration has already reduced our support costs by 10%."

-- Lynn Swimmer, IT Manager, BSDHD



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