

Leading workplace insurer automates IP address management



Information technology plays a pivotal role in the fast-moving financial services sector. Effective IP address management is critical, and Anthony Lackey chose Cygna IPControl™ to replace risky and time consuming manual methods.

Integrated into IT infrastructure delivery processes, the Cygna IPControl solution frees valuable IT staff resources by automating and consolidating IP address provisioning. Project managers now have local control over their IP addressing needs — while Anthony has a common policy engine — and what used to take hours can now be achieved in minutes.



Where possible we needed to adopt a zero-touch process, enabling IP addresses to be distributed and embedded directly within the IT infrastructure.

Anthony Lackey, Communications Services Consultant, Unum

Cygnal IPControl™ powers IP address management automation at Unum to cut costs and streamline service

Challenge

Operating across the United States and the UK, Unum is a leading provider of financial protection benefits available at the workplace. It offers employer and employee-funded disability, life, accident, and critical illness cover to protect millions of people and their families in the event of illness or injury. Unum has won many industry awards and is consistently rated in the top three for both individual and group protection.

Like any financial institution, IT infrastructure is integral to effective day-to-day operations at Unum. But to function correctly every device needs an identifier—a unique IP (internet protocol) address. Managing the allocation of IP addresses across an increasingly complex infrastructure had become a time-consuming process that involved as many as four people from the company's central IT team.

With over 25,000 IP addresses administered manually using a variety of spreadsheets, web pages, and locally developed applications, the potential for error and consequential business disruption had become too great. The company decided that a more consistent approach enabling more provisioning process automation was needed.

Solution

Unum researched the market for something that would help ensure the integrity of its IP address management and give its central IT team the time to take a step back. The chosen solution would need to allow often diversely

located IT project managers to locally manage their own IP addressing requirements, while keeping centralized control under a common policy.

The company arranged product demonstrations from potential suppliers, followed by real-life pilot implementations of short-listed solutions. "There were a few passable products on the market," explains Anthony Lackey, "but Cygnal IPControl stood out as the most cost effective with the richest functionality. It also offered easy integration using standard application programming interfaces."

Unum opted for Cygnal IPControl software running on Cygnal Sapphire DNS (domain name system) and DHCP (dynamic host configuration protocol) EX servers deployed in main and back-up data centres in the US and the UK. Working with the Cygnal Labs professional services team, Unum set about extracting, validating, transferring, and uploading IP address data onto the Sapphire devices.

Initially, two Cygnal Sapphire x10 appliances were configured to manage DNS/DHCP services for the internal corporate environment, with three distributed Cygnal Sapphire x5 appliances for external DNS and DHCP purposes on remote campuses. Later a Cygnal Sapphire x20 appliance was deployed for the management layer and two further Cygnal Sapphire x10 appliances were added to support replication for even greater resilience.

Once Cygnal IPControl was up-and-running, the company moved away from its spreadsheets and web pages, and began to exploit the Cygnal IPControl coding capability by integrating IP address assignment into infrastructure provisioning processes. Anthony Lackey explains: "At

Unum we use the BIG-IP product suite from F5 Networks to optimise and accelerate applications and balance loading across the network. With the use of Cygnal IPControl we are able to automate several of our manual processes. That's a huge benefit for us."

Value

Today, IP addresses at Unum are managed through Cygnal IPControl. Most are IPv4 addresses but with IPControl the company is well positioned to migrate to the more complex IPv6 protocol as business need dictates. The whole process has become far more efficient and resilient. IP address conflicts have become a thing of the past. If ever a legacy conflict does emerge Cygnal IPControl enables investigation and resolution in typically 15 minutes, rather than the up-to-three-hours it took before.

Now, as a new data centre comes on stream or new equipment is added to the network, Cygnal IPControl can automatically identify new subnets as they are created and provide unique IP addresses without manual intervention. Meanwhile, the Cygnal IPControl discovery capability allows effective auditing of the network, verifying switch and router addresses to help ensure device optimization.

Anthony Lackey sums up: "When new IP addresses are required local IT teams can go directly to a management screen, enter a few pieces of information and get addresses allocated in less than five minutes, rather than the half-an-hour it took before. Efficiency has improved and employees and customers are getting a better service as a result. Everyone is happy."



"When new IP addresses are required local IT teams can go directly to a management screen, enter a few pieces of information and get addresses allocated in less than five minutes, rather than the half-an-hour it took before. Efficiency has improved and employees and customers are getting a better service as a result. Everyone is happy."

Anthony Lackey, Communications Services Consultant, Unum

Core services

- Cygnal IPControl™ software with Sapphire EX series DNS and DHCP server appliances

For more information about Cygnal Labs products and services, please contact us at

Toll Free: **(844) 442-9462** | International: **+1 (305) 501-2430** | Email: sales@cygnallabs.com

Cygnal Labs Corp. | 1111 Lincoln Road, Suite 760 | Miami Beach, FL 33139 | United States