

Unum

Leading workplace insurer automates IP address management



Challenge

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.

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.

“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

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 Cygna 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 IPControl software running on Cygna Diamond IP 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 Cygna Diamond IP professional services team, Unum set about extracting, validating, transferring, and uploading IP address data onto the Sapphire devices. Initially, two Sapphire x10 appliances were configured to manage DNS/DHCP services for the internal corporate environment, with three distributed Sapphire x5 appliances for external DNS and DHCP purposes on remote campuses. Later a Sapphire x20 appliance was deployed for the management layer and two further Sapphire x10 appliances were added to support replication for even greater resilience. Once IPControl was up-and-running, the company moved away from its spreadsheets and web pages,

and began to exploit the 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 Cygna Diamond 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 Cygna Diamond

Core services

- Cygna IPControl
Software with Sapphire EX series DNS and DHCP server appliances.

"What was particularly pleasing was that the N3K experts had directly involved us in the development. We have always been in direct contact with Cygna Labs in Canada."

Ralf Kutt, IT administrator at Frankfurt University Hospital

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 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, IPControl can automatically identify new subnets as they are created and provide unique IP addresses without manual intervention. Meanwhile, the 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."

About Cygna Labs

Cygna Labs is a software developer and one of the top three global DDI vendors. Many Fortune 100 customers rely on Cygna Labs' DDI products and services, in addition to its industry-leading security and compliance solutions to detect and proactively mitigate data security threats, affordably pass compliance audits, and increase the productivity of their IT departments.

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