U.S. Army Fort Saves Weeks of Deployment Time Using Quest's Exchange Migration Tools

The Challenge

Fort Rucker needed to migrate its Exchange 5.5 environment and five Exchange servers to three Exchange 2003 clustered servers. It also needed to use a Storage Area Network as a shared data repository. The migration included a total of 4,500 users and approximately 150 gigabytes of data.

Fort Rucker considered using migration tools from various vendors. However, each vendor's solution required Fort Rucker to bring down its system for as many as four days to ensure a reliable migration. Ted Smith, the chief of data services at Fort Rucker, knew that any system unavailability was unacceptable.

"Our biggest requirement was zero or minimal downtime during the migration because the Army relies very heavily upon e-mail in its daily operations," explained Smith. "Our commanders and directors utilize it to manage the entire base and must have it 24/7 for emergency contact purposes."

Another complication Fort Rucker faced was the IT group did not own or manage the target Active Directory (AD) environment. They required permissions, which they couldn't readily access, to be set within the target to seamlessly migrate from their source. As a result, the project needed to be coordinated with NETCOM and the regional data center, which added another level of complexity to the project.

The Quest Solution

Quest's migration solution synchronized the environments and allowed Fort Rucker to migrate at a specified time once the synchronization was complete. Fort Rucker was able to schedule migration tasks, work around various organizational requirements, and build jobs in which high-priority users were excluded from the mass migration.

"We'd used Quest before in our AD migration and that was a good experience for us," said Smith. "We also discovered there really aren't a lot of options out there for this type of migration. Having had that positive AD migration with Quest gave us absolute confidence that we were making another good choice with its Exchange migration tool. And with its products' attractive features, we really didn't seriously consider any other tools."

Fort Rucker utilized MessageStats to prepare the Exchange 5.5 environment for migration. MessageStats helped analyze the Exchange infrastructure, including traffic, capacity, volume and other critical data.

Quest Professional Services helped to convert the base-centric environment to the new regional-centric data center, facilitated the synchronization, verified the tools were working properly and helped establish the user profiles. The actual migration involved switching the profiles to the new servers. Since all of the data had already been transferred to the new environment, Smith's team needed just a week to move all 4,500 system users.

Migration Suite for Exchange and the Exchange Migration Wizard allowed Fort Rucker to perform an unattended, transparent migration between Exchange environments — without a service or workflow interruption or any loss of productivity.

The Bottom Line

With Exchange Migration Wizard and Migration Suite for Exchange, Fort Rucker saved considerable time migrating its environment from Exchange 5.5 to Exchange 2003 without any system downtime.

"Other Army organizations and forts have taken weeks longer to complete their migrations without a tool like Exchange Migration Wizard. Quest's product automates time-consuming manual processes, such as running or changing scripts. By using Exchange Migration Wizard and the Migration Suite for Exchange, we saved two to three weeks of technical preparation time."

- Ted Smith
  Chief of Data Services
  U.S. Army Fort Rucker

Overview

Headquarters

Fort Rucker, Alabama

Critical Needs

A tool to assist with a migration from Exchange 5.5 to Exchange 2003 without system downtime or interruptions to user communications.

Solution

Exchange Migration Wizard, Migration Suite for Exchange

Results

• Saved weeks of technical time by automating common tasks

• Prevented system downtime for migration

• Ensured continuous operations to meet service level agreements

• Provided seamless and uninterrupted communications for system users

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It was able to complete the migration smoothly and seamlessly, allowing system users to remain fully operational.

"Other Army organizations and forts have taken weeks longer to complete their migrations without a tool like Exchange Migration Wizard," Smith said. "Quest's product automates a lot of the time-consuming manual processes, such as running or changing scripts. By using Exchange Migration Wizard and the Migration Suite for Exchange, we saved two to three weeks of technical preparation time."

Fort Rucker also recommends Quest's Professional Services for a migration in a similar environment. According to Smith, Quest's technical consulting assistance made a big difference throughout the implementation and helped Fort Rucker's IT staff become familiar with the tool.

"Our migration would not have gone as smoothly without Quest's consultant on site," stated Smith. "We may have been able to execute the migration by ourselves, but it would have taken us weeks longer to obtain the knowledge necessary to do it successfully."

Fort Rucker also purchased MessageStats and Spotlight for Exchange. Smith's staff is now utilizing these tools to benchmark the new Exchange environment and generate performance reports. This visibility helps to ensure Fort Rucker's environment remains healthy and that response times are within reasonable tolerance levels.

About U.S. Army Fort Rucker

Fort Rucker became Army Aviation's centerpiece when flight training was consolidated there in 1973. U.S. Air Force helicopter pilots have trained there since 1971. Fort Rucker instructors teach U.S. and foreign aviators everything from initial rotary-wing courses to advanced courses in aviation safety.

About Quest Software, Inc.

Quest Software, Inc. delivers innovative products that help organizations get more performance and productivity from their applications, databases and Windows infrastructure. Through a deep expertise in IT operations and a continued focus on what works best, Quest helps more than 50,000 customers worldwide meet higher expectations for enterprise IT. Quest Software can be found in offices around the globe and at **www.quest.com**.

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