


 interlink
ireland

carrying your reputation

Open Minds: Making the link for Interlink

"The systems are at the heart of the business. If we lost the server for a couple of hours things would be uncomfortable, and if it went down for a day it would be business critical. Having the data replication and the LifeKeeper system provides us with peace of mind and business continuity."

Operating since 1986, Interlink Ireland is a leading courier company, serving the Republic and Northern Ireland through 35 depots. The business has 600 employees working in its network with an additional 200 people at its head office in Athlone.

Central to the business success is the ability to keep track of tens of thousands of individual parcels each day. All the regional depots are networked to a central computer system in Athlone where a central Progress database application ensures each delivery and collection is traced. The system logs requests, tracks the parcel as it is sent to the central depot and captures signatures when the parcel is delivered. The data is also sent to the website so that customers have a track and trace facility through a web interface.



IT Manager Colin Kennedy explains:
"We have a business that is completely dependent on IT systems, but many of the systems were 10 years old and servers and hardware were getting very slow. For example, some of our reports were taking over 9 hours to run. We needed to replace IT systems to support the growth of the business."

Interlink Chose Lifekeeper

"I am impressed with the results and particularly with the way Infinity and Open Minds worked together to provide us with this solution."

The head office server was backed up each night, and could be restored onto a back up machine, but the process was taking 9 hours. This was a real risk to the business and Interlink wanted something much quicker to ensure business continuity.

Colin approached Infinity IT who were asked to provide a solution to overcome the difficulties that Interlink was experiencing with its existing Data General systems. The current systems, as well as being slow, were also unreliable; therefore speed and reliability were the main requirements for the new solution.

Infinity IT proposed an open platform running Red Hat Linux Enterprise. Infinity IT successfully migrated Interlink from its existing Data General proprietary Unix system over to Red Hat Linux Enterprise. As Interlink operates on a 24 x 7 basis, Infinity IT recommended that, in order to further enhance this open solution, Interlink should employ a complete failover resilience and business continuity solution. SteelEye's LifeKeeper from Open Minds had previously been successfully deployed in other Infinity IT customer sites and was the most appropriate solution for Interlink in order to give the required level of resilience.



Open Minds Provide the Solution

"We chose LifeKeeper because we liked the fact that recovery takes place in under 5 minutes. We did a lot of testing at the time of installation, and so far so good – everything is running really well. LifeKeeper does exactly what it says on the tin."

Open Minds are the registered SteelEye Competence and Support Centre for the UK and Ireland, and had extensive knowledge of both the product and how to implement the SteelEye solution effectively and efficiently.

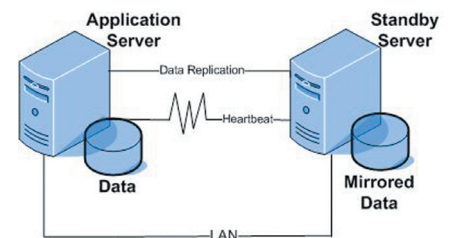
Once the servers were installed Open Minds provided a business continuity solution. Managing Director Shobana Patel explained: "We set up two things for Interlink. The first is the data replication facility. This means that whenever anything is changed on the main database, it is instantaneously copied to the second server."

She continued: "We also implemented LifeKeeper. This monitors the status of the application on the live server. If it detects a problem, for example a system crash or a hardware problem, LifeKeeper on the back up machine recognises this and starts running the database. It also reconfigures the network so anyone who was connected to live machine will

automatically be connected to back up machine. This happens seamlessly so users don't notice any disruption. It then notifies Colin and his team by email, so they can investigate the problem. During all of this, the users are unaware of any problems with their servers. They continue using their systems as normal. This means that the IT department can concentrate on fixing the problems rather than fielding user calls."

Both data replication and LifeKeeper were installed at the head office in Athlone over a weekend in November.

Interlink Progress Database servers



Data Replication Ensures Availability

The most important factor in ensuring a smooth failover is the consistency of the data stored in the database on the two servers. If the database is started up on the second cluster member with data that is out of date then there is a serious risk of data corruption not to mention severe consequences to the business. To ensure the data remains

consistent across both cluster members data replication software was used. This has been installed not only at thousands of sites worldwide but also at previous installations carried out by Open Minds, and its close integration with LifeKeeper with a recovery kit developed and fully supported by SteelEye.

About Open Minds

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Open Minds provide software solutions, support, consultancy and training for High Availability, and Disaster Recovery solutions for IT systems. A strong team of technical consultants offer experience gained from many years of successfully installing and supporting LifeKeeper solutions throughout the world in order to implement effective and easily maintained High Availability Solutions.

Open Minds is the registered SteelEye competence centre for the United Kingdom and Ireland. We have longstanding partnerships with VAR's, Software Houses and Systems

Integrators to provide a full technical backup including pre-sales, installation services and support required to fully implement a high-availability solution.

For more information, please visit www.openminds.co.uk

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