

Meeting productivity and customer service goals with EMC Ionix



ESSENTIALS

Challenge

- COLT operates 19 data centers across Europe, typically with more than 100 client networks hosted within each; a comprehensive network management solution was required to help effectively manage these complex infrastructures and support continuous operations

Solutions

- EMC Ionix IP Availability Manager
- EMC Ionix MPLS Manager
- EMC Ionix Business Dashboard
- EMC Ionix Network Protocol Manager

Key benefits

- Manages all components of a multi-vendor network
- Automatically correlates alarms across the infrastructure
- Identifies root-cause problems and analyzes their business impact
- Provides various types of maps (physical connections, VLAN connections)
- Scalable solution

COLT is Europe's information delivery platform, enabling its customers to share, process, and store their vital business information. COLT provides major organizations, midsize businesses, and wholesale customers with a powerful resource that combines network and IT infrastructure with expertise in IT managed services, networking, and communication solutions. Focused on out-performing competitors in reliability and value, the company continues to set new standards for service and redefining the concept of customer care in the telecommunications industry.

To meet its ambitious service goals, COLT has invested in the technology, infrastructure, and staff to deliver comprehensive, end-to-end data, voice, and managed services. COLT operates a 13-country, 25,000 km network that includes metropolitan area networks in 34 major European cities with direct fibre connections into 16,000 buildings and 19 COLT data centers. COLT has extended its range of IP Virtual Private Network (VPN) services to include an option for Multi-Protocol Label Switching (MPLS). MPLS joins COLT IP VPN Corporate offerings such as Internet services, dedicated point-to-point IP VPN leveraging leased line, and ATM/Frame Relay-based IP VPNs.

COLT's strong emphasis on customer service, coupled with customers' expectations of near 100 percent uptime, drove a requirement for effective network management that would maintain service levels and prevent network disruption. The service assurance solution, which would be standardized across locations to improve productivity, also needed to be both scalable and future-proof.

COLT embarked on a thorough evaluation of several vendors within the networked management space, using a live environment. One of the key requirements was that the product should be able to discover all elements in a complex network.

EMC® Ionix™ was the only solution that met COLT's needs. EMC Ionix also demonstrated superior levels of accuracy in pinpointing network problems. In addition, minimal customization was required compared with other network management software. By enabling automation, Ionix enables COLT to increase its competitive advantage by keeping operational costs at a minimum. The solution automates diagnosis of faults and helps illuminate which customers and services are impacted.

COMPLEX INFRASTRUCTURE DEMANDS STATE-OF-THE-ART MANAGEMENT SOLUTION

COLT opened state-of-the-art data centers in 13 countries across Europe, offering a wide range of services from basic collocation to high-value managed and professional services. These data centers are designed for both corporate and carrier customers. Typically there are more than 100 client networks hosted within each data center, so the infrastructure within each one is highly complex.

In a matter of hours, EMC Ionix IP Availability Manager was quickly and efficiently installed and rolled out to all locations and data centers across Europe, providing automated intelli-

gent analysis of the network. Ionix is also easy to use. Network problems are displayed graphically on-screen with their impacts clearly highlighted. This information enables the IT staff to quickly diagnose and resolve the root causes of problems, rather than just the symptoms, to maintain the highest possible level of service.

UNSURPASSED SUPPORT FOR THE MPLS SERVICE OFFERING

Based on the proven track record of EMC Ionix, COLT deployed EMC Ionix MPLS Manager to manage its IP VPN Corporate product in an environment with over 30,000 devices. Leveraging the patented EMC Common Information Model, EMC Ionix MPLS Manager delivers cross-domain impact analysis of failures and offers visibility into the MPLS-based VPNs. COLT is also now using Ionix to manage its Switched Gigabit IP product, a high-speed managed Gigabit Ethernet IP network, the first such product in the marketplace.

Additional EMC Ionix investments include the EMC Ionix Business Dashboard and EMC Ionix Network Protocol Manager. The EMC Ionix Business Dashboard provides operations with a web-based user interface and will eventually enable the presentation of realtime reporting in COLT's existing customer portal. EMC Ionix Network Protocol Manager provides COLT with increased visibility of faults and misconfiguration in the routing protocol domain. This is key for a Tier One ISP and providers of MPLS-based VPNs and managed Ethernet solutions.

FASTER PROBLEM RESOLUTION, IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY

The ability to find the root cause of problems in the network saves COLT huge amounts of time. After just a few months of using EMC Ionix software, the company found that the average time required to resolve a network problem had been cut in half. When this is multiplied across each problem on each customer network, it adds up to a real business benefit.

Reallocating personnel out of the intensive rules-writing and customization required by other network management software has improved productivity of network administrators and systems engineers. Unlike the software COLT was previously using, EMC Ionix IP Availability Manager automatically diagnoses and analyzes authentic problems that may affect services. The company used to dedicate around 1,300 person-hours annually to these tasks. Now, this work has been reduced to virtually zero hours a week, so more time can be spent on other areas of the business such as contract expansion.

PROVEN PERFORMANCE LEADS TO EXPANDED USE

EMC Ionix has played a key role in helping COLT monitor and analyze its network more efficiently. With the Ionix proactive diagnosis of authentic problems, COLT can now ensure that a problem will be fixed before it impacts the customer. Perhaps the greatest benefit to users is that the high-quality service levels they expect and demand are guaranteed, so they can concentrate on running their businesses with confidence.

EMC Ionix results have been so impressive that COLT is planning to expand the system to cover other domains including its rich portfolio of Ethernet and Optical Transmission services.

CONTACT US

To learn how EMC products, services, and solutions help solve your business and IT challenges, contact your local representative or authorized reseller—or visit us at www.EMC.com.

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EMC Corporation
Hopkinton, Massachusetts 01748-9103
1-508-435-1000 In North America 1-866-464-7381
www.EMC.com

EMC Computer Systems (UK) Limited
EMC Tower, Great West Road
Brentford, TW8 9AN, United Kingdom
+44 (0)870 608 7777
uk.EMC.com

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