

Proteus Cuts Costs and Frees Resources at George Washington University

BACKGROUND

The George Washington University (GWU) is a private university located in Washington, D.C.. Founded in 1821 as The Columbian College, the university has since developed into one of the world's leading educational and research institutions. George Washington University (GWU) is now home to more than 9,700 full-time undergraduates, studying in 87 majors, and demonstrating a 92% retention rate from freshman to sophomore year. The students come from all fifty states, and more than 125 other countries worldwide. GWU has a distinguished medical school, a highly ranked law school, campuses in Virginia and its own hospital. Additionally, the school boasts an impressive record in the fields of engineering, medicine, political science, public affairs, business, psychology, and computer science.

George Washington University embraces the 21st century through extensive use of computing and information technologies: GWU's computer labs provide students with a variety of productivity, specialty, and educational software available on each PC; their comprehensive student network known as "GWired" allows students to get instant, real-time information on grades, coursework, services, programs, and events on campus; and the university also offers a wide array of distance education classes that can be taken for credit over the internet. GWU also provides each and every student with a personalized, PIN-protected, "GWorld Card", that allows students to make campus purchases and online transactions through a secure web portal, eliminating their need to carry cash or any other cards while they travel GWU's hallowed hallways. With such an extensive, complex array of services, workstations, applications, and access points throughout the university, it is no wonder that George Washington University has been hailed as one of the most technologically advanced institutions in America.



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Director of Technology Engineering



OPPORTUNITY

GWU had an all-IP, all-Cisco network, tasked with linking 160 buildings in the Washington D.C. area and supporting 30,000 students, faculty and staff. Their network has multiple gigabits/second of bandwidth in the core and 100Mbps of bandwidth to workstations. For DNS services, GWU was running BIND open source software on a Sun Solaris server, and the university used a homegrown application written in Perl for its Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (DHCP) and IP address management functions.

“Our system was working, but it required a lot of overhead with security and patches. And the DNS services weren't integrated with DHCP,” explains Bret Jones, director of technology engineering at GWU. “The management and documentation for our system were pretty iffy. It was getting unruly to manage and maintain.” Consequently, GWU ran a competitive procurement for appliances to handle DNS, DHCP and IP address management. GWU considered solutions from MetalInfo, Infoblox and BlueCat Networks.



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SOLUTION

GWU chose BlueCat because "their appliances were the most flexible as far as customizing the interfaces," Jones says. "They have an open source database, as opposed to a proprietary database, and it is easier to integrate with Lightweight Directory Access Protocol." GWU purchased four BlueCat Adonis 1000 combined DNS and DHCP Server appliances for its network, and is also migrating from a home-grown, manual IP address management application to The Proteus 5000 Enterprise IPAM Appliance. GWU has recently installed the five BlueCat appliances, and this fall, will migrate to the new systems. Jones says the BlueCat appliances will automate the process of handing out IP addresses, validating users and giving them secure access to the network.

IMPACT

"I've been deploying appliances over the last three to four years, and those have generally worked out better because they don't take up all that administrative overhead," Jones says. "These are utility type services, and the BlueCat appliances free my folks up to do other things we need them to be doing." Jones has also replaced software applications for firewalls, intrusion detection and virus scanning with appliances in recent years.

"With the [BlueCat] appliances, I have a centralized place where I do my IP management, DNS and DHCP...and my administrative overhead has decreased dramatically. I'll also have better documentation and a more streamlined process for handing out those DNS and DHCP addresses." Jones says the appliances will result in GWU hiring one less full-time employee in the IT department - a savings of tens of thousands of those dollars featuring the university's namesake, each year.



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**Bret Jones
Director of Technology
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