

Investor AB becomes Master of its Domains

BACKGROUND

Investor AB is the largest industrial holding company in the Nordic region. For almost a century, its business concept has been to build best-in-class companies in sectors where it has a strong knowledge and networking advantage. Investor AB is a leading shareholder in a number of multinational companies, including AstraZeneca, Ericsson and SEB. The company also conducts private equity activities in North America, Europe and Asia. For Stockholm-based Investor AB, its networking advantage is not limited to just people.

OPPORTUNITY

The reliability of Investor AB's older BIND servers was a concern of the IT department. The continuous efforts to streamline the operations and limit the time spent on repetitive administrative tasks were drivers to replace the old DNS infrastructure. BIND had also been identified as the number one security vulnerability to UNIX® systems by the SANS Institute.

IT personnel were concerned about the growing dependency the company had placed on third-party consultants to maintain its name servers, three Compaq ProLiant systems running BIND v9.2.2 on the Solaris™ Operating Environment in a master-slave configuration, but that wasn't all. Notes Fredrik Kenmo, System Administrator: "Our DNS server hardware, installed three years ago, had reached its end-of-life and needed to be replaced. The complexity of the BIND servers raised concerns about the security and contingency of our DNS infrastructure. The operation and administration of more than 300 zones and 1500 records were handled without a proper interface. Even the smallest mistake could cause us major security and functionality issues."

Investor AB undertook a search to find a replacement for their aging UNIX servers. Kenmo and his fellow team members set out to find the solution that would remove the administrative burden that Investor AB's three DNS servers were placing on network staff. The solution selected must also have a user-friendly interface, a hardened operating system and provide automated patch management.

SOLUTION

Investor AB has gained command and control of their network since the adoption of the Adonis DNS/DHCP Appliance™ from BlueCat Networks, Inc. to manage its DNS operations.

Following an exhaustive screening of six products, Investor AB selected the 1U, rack mountable Adonis DNS/DHCP Appliance. The Adonis DNS/DHCP Appliance provides Investor AB with a simple, secure and affordable solution that removes the complexity and simplifies the management of DNS operations.

With a hardened Linux® OS kernel and built-in firewall, the Adonis DNS/DHCP Appliance provides Investor AB with additional protection by limiting the services exposed to the external world and vulnerable to potential security threats. The Adonis Management Console™ software supports SSL and deploys configurations to the appliance through a 128-bit SSL connection using 1024-bit certificates on both ends. This connection protects against unauthorized connections and packet snooping. BIND also runs inside a jailed environment where there are no executables or system scripts thereby discouraging would-be attackers to "play" with inside the jail.



“... I save time by using the Adonis Management Console. More importantly, we have better control over our DNS infrastructure.”

Fredrik Kenmo
System Administrator
Investor AB



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CASE STUDY FINANCE

Management of Investor AB's DNS operations is simpler with the Adonis Management Console, a Java™ technology-based client application to build the configurations for the appliance. The client GUI was installed quickly on management stations running the Windows XP operating system.

IMPACT

"It was extremely easy to perform the initial setup and to import the zone information from the BIND servers. Maintaining the DNS information is a breeze," cites Kenmo. "Zone information doesn't change so much over time, but each time I need to make a change or add an additional zone, I save time by using the Adonis Management Console. More importantly, we have better control over our DNS infrastructure."

Ease of use is not the only benefit that Kenmo has realized since replacing the old UNIX servers with the Adonis DNS/DHCP Appliance. The Adonis Management Console client application facilitates the generation of Transaction Signature keys to perform secure zone transfers and updates between the appliance and other DNS name servers.

"Previously, we managed DNS operations reactively", states Kenmo, "We detected configuration errors reactively." We had to make sure that we got it right when we made the changes. Today, with time saving features like patch management, automatic updates for the operating system and BIND implementation as well as the live data check, the Adonis DNS/DHCP Appliance simplifies the management of DNS. The Adonis DNS/DHCP Appliance truly is a turnkey solution. "With its integrated HA capabilities, the Adonis DNS/DHCP Appliance provides us with the reliability we need."

BlueCat Networks is there when support is needed.

"I'm very happy with the responsiveness of the support organization," notes Kenmo. "All technicians with whom I have been in contact provided me with relevant information and solved the issues I had, even when the problem was not related to the Adonis DNS/DHCP Appliance or software, but rather errors with the imported BIND configurations!"

Before the adoption of the Adonis DNS/DHCP Appliance, Investor AB had no administrative interface and had to rely solely on a text-based editor when updating its DNS configuration, an all but straightforward process. Now with the Adonis DNS/DHCP Appliance, the move forward has been straight and quick. Thanks to BlueCat Networks, Investor AB has truly gained command and control of their IP network.



“ Maintaining the DNS information is a breeze. ”

Fredrik Kenmo
System Administrator
Investor AB



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