

Performance Guard™

Roedovre Kommune

“When Lars Roark needs to make qualified decisions regarding targeted investments, he relies on Performance Guard™ as an integral tool”



Three Counties Show the Way

When the demand for county services is on the rise, and county budgets are having a hard time keeping up, it becomes necessary to think in unconventional ways. This is exactly what three counties in the greater Copenhagen area did when they started an initiative to create a common IT community. However, while the initiation of such a collaborative IT effort makes good sense, the technical difficulties involved soon become painfully obvious. This is why the three counties turned to CapaSystems to overcome this challenge. CapaSystems can ensure that the common IT community will be able to deliver essential public services in an age when the demand for these services is going only one way - UP.

The joint IT venture between the three counties was initiated in the spring of 2002 to ensure that the counties could meet three objectives: a reduction in public expenses, greater efficiency, and better service. In the first phase, the three counties combined their IT procurements and IT training; recently, the three counties have begun to take a closer look at the joint optimization of their respective IT system operations.

Structure in Infrastructure

One of the County's it-groups was used in a pilot project for the joint IT venture with CapaSystems. As Lars Roark, Roedovre County's IT manager explains: “During the first year of the joint IT initiative we focused on the ‘easy returns’, that is, returns that we could accomplish through large purchase discounts and the logical consolidation of similar functions. Beyond these basic measures, we didn't really know what kind of plans we should be making for the future. What kind of problems would we face if we continued to try to deliver bet-

ter service at the lowest possible price? It was impossible not to notice the complex infrastructure that comprised a single county's IT installation, and it became very obvious that this kind of complexity was not going to decrease, if the IT operations of the three counties were combined. If we were going to improve services for county residents, we were going to have to maintain this IT infrastructure - seen from the perspective of the user. And this is where CapaSystems' Performance Guard™ is a perfect fit”.

According to Lars Roark, the feedback from users regarding system performance generally falls into two extreme categories: people who are overly impatient and people who are extraordinarily patient (and Lars isn't ashamed to admit that he belongs to the first group). Obviously, it is equally difficult to carry out a general performance measurement from the subjective input of both of these groups. With Performance Guard™, though, the IT department has a tool that can measure performance down to the individual user level. In any given network, Performance Guard™ gives a first hand view of the user experience by measuring actual response times directly on the PC of each user. This creates a kind of structure within the IT infrastructure that allows IT-managers to get a more objective picture of the user experience.

“The 24/7 Electronic City Hall”

Behind the joint IT-venture, there is a committee comprised of county supervisors and the respective IT-managers for each county. The people responsible for making this vision a reality are:

- Kim Niegsh, IT-Manager, Ishoej County
- Lars Roark, IT-chef, Roedovre Country
- Jorgen Eriksen, IT-Manager, Hvidovre

Open Model of Collaboration

Before turning to CapaSystems, Roedovre County had tried other methods for the measurement and optimization of response times, but these methods did not achieve the desired results. Consequently, CapaSystems and its implementation partner, IT4U, had to meet some very specific requirements when the joint IT effort was initiated. The

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technical side of the solution had to be completely convincing - and for Lars Roark and his colleagues in the joint IT venture, Performance Guard™ was very convincing. However, it was just as important that IT4U was willing to be a part of the open model of collaboration, which already existed between the three counties.

"We had already decided when we established the joint IT venture that an open model of collaboration, where we could continuously identify and coordinate new objectives, was the only workable model for us," says Lars Roark. The alternative was spending a lot of unproductive time on hypothetical ideas and models prior to establishing the common IT community. Even if we did this, there was still no guarantee that we would be able to anticipate all the new contingencies, demands, and problems that would likely emerge. We laid out our open model for collaboration with IT4U and they were willing to be a part of this model. It is something that requires a lot of trust and commitment to teamwork on the part of every player.

The Pilot Project Yields Results

Under the open model for collaboration, the partners reached an agreement regarding the general framework for both a pilot project and - if the pilot project gave the desired results - a subsequent full installation.

It quickly became apparent that the open model for collaboration was the right choice, as it identified some critical challenges. First, the three counties found that it was necessary to save data over a considerably longer period of time than Performance Guard's™ default period. As a result of the open collaboration between the counties, IT4U, and CapaSystems, the issues were solved through an open dialog. This exchange of ideas was so productive that much of the functionality that was requested, today are incorporated into the standard version of Performance Guard™.

Almost Data Mining

In August of 2003, the "pilot" was nearly complete in Roedovre County, which now had Performance Guard™ running on roughly 700 user PCs in more than 40 different offices and facilities, including county administrative offices, convalescent

homes, and daycare centers. In early 2004, the two other counties became even closer linked with the Roedovre county through a powerful new network, and during the summer of 2004, an updated version of Performance Guard™ was installed on nearly 2000 user PCs in all three counties. Looking ahead, the counties are also considering expanding this installation to their educational IT-systems, which comprise another 2000 PCs. Use of Performance Guard™ has also provided additional benefits. In addition to collecting and reporting the response times on user PCs, Performance Guard™ has also helped to establish the right server configurations, so that it is balanced with the rest of the installation. The IT-managers and technicians in Roedovre County are already engaged in the kind of creative thinking that is taking them beyond Performance Guard's™ general user interface and allowing them to conduct their own inquiries and interpretations of the data gathered by the system.

Use of CapaSystems Performance Guard™ at Roedovre County includes:

- *Nearly 2000 users upon project completion*
- *More than 40 separate offices and facilities, including county administrative offices, convalescent homes, and daycare centers (around 200 offices and facilities when all three counties are included)*

Lars Roark is impressed with how robust the tem's SQL-database is and how easy it is to collect the data in new ways: "We can ask so many questions beyond what we might have anticipated when the general user interface was developed, and because the system is so well designed, we can almost perform Data Mining on the collected data. If there is a situation on which we need more clarification, we just make an inquiry. And if something in the installation needs to be improved, we can make the improvements ourselves, before the IT users have even noticed that there is a problem." Lars Roark sees Performance Guard™ as an integral tool when he needs to make qualified decisions regarding targeted investments that can lead to better service in specific areas. In this respect, Performance Guard™ is also valuable in helping to keep expenses under control. Thanks to Performance Guard™ Lars Roark and his two

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colleagues will insure that the nearly 100,000 residents in the three counties will experience a steady increase in the quality of service they receive.

About CapaSystems A/S

CapaSystems A/S is a Danish company that develops software solutions that helps to ensure optimal performance on all computers while reducing the cost and effort required for administration, maintenance and support of Windows®-based clients.

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