

IT Monitoring Absolutely Critical for Norwegian People's Aid

All organizations must hold together and have a technical environment that allows employees to collaborate – no matter of where they are located. But what if the differences between the offices are enormous? If some of them are located in urbanized cities and others are scattered in rural Africa with limited connectivity? That is the reality for the aid organization Norwegian People's Aid (Norsk Folkehjelp) which has chosen OP5 Monitor to monitor IT and ensure a functional infrastructure.

– We have tried different monitoring solutions over the years. One big advantage with OP5 Monitor is that we now have access to everything in a single dashboard – and we get a good overview of the situation instead of having to enter five or six different systems”, says Reili Aamodt, IT Manager at Norwegian People's Aid.

Norwegian People's Aid is an independent aid organization with operations in more than 35 countries within demining, long-term development assistance and emergency and disaster response.

Complex IT Environment

The organization has offices in 30 countries and the head office is located in Oslo. The IT environment is relatively complex with a mix of IBM servers, SAN, Hyper-V nodes and 40-50 virtual servers, Exchange,

financial system, CRM and Skype for business. The offices are connected by fixed lines, but many of them were previously dependent on satellite connections.

The operations is managed entirely by Norwegian People's Aid's own staff, which increased the need for comprehensive and flexible monitoring. The organization has in total about 100 network devices, servers, switches and sensors – and approximately 1,500 active users.

“It became gradually obvious for us that we needed more accurate monitoring. The system must be fine-tunable to detect errors before they occur. For example, getting warnings before a disk becomes full and important services stop working. At the same time, you can't act on each and every warning since some alarms have lower priority”, says John Toven, IT Senior Advisor at Norwegian People's Aid.

About Norwegian People's Aid

Norwegian People's Aid (Norsk Folkehjelp) is an independent labor movement's humanitarian organization. The organization undertakes practical preventive and supportive work at home and abroad. The work is organized into four main activities: long-term development cooperation, mine- and explosives clearance, first aid and rescue services, and refugee, asylum and integration work. More information is available on www.npaid.org.



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Continued Norwegian Expansion for OP5

After a market evaluation, Norwegian People's Aid decided to select OP5 Monitor in the fall of 2017. That was a decision that of course pleased OP5.

"This partnership is an important part of our expansion in the Norwegian market. But it's extra motivating to be able to contribute to Norwegian People's Aid's important relief efforts around the world", says Johan Smidebrant, Sales Manager for OP5 in Norway and Denmark.

Built on Open Source Code

OP5 Monitor is a comprehensive monitoring solution built on open source code. It can handle large amounts of data from a variety of devices and systems – and all data is viewable in dashboards.

Today, Norwegian People's Aid get a much better picture of what really happens with the equipment. The monitoring is based on a large number of parameters to make the staff aware of important issues, avoiding unnecessary emergency situations.

There are numerous examples of problems that Norwegian People's Aid has discovered and avoided in time. When a backup stopped working, a clear warning

was given in OP5 Monitor about the risk of having the entire financial system going down. And when Microsoft sent out a patch, it affected the CPU level and users were thrown out of critical services. With OP5 Monitor, the operating staff could identify a permanent problem and take the correct action.

"We have saved a lot of time and work with OP5 and I'm impressed with the fast implementation of OP5 monitoring!", says Reili Aamodt.

Monitoring of Even More Devices

Norwegian People's Aid will continue to expand its monitoring and connect even more offices with OP5 Monitor. The goal is to monitor everything down to individual printers and access points in each country.

Log management is another area up for review. There are new solutions available today based on Elastic and using artificial intelligence (AI) to implement real-time calculations of e.g. disk space.

"OP5 has integrated so many different components in their solution. It's an added value that you can't find everywhere, and it is impressive", says John Toven.

Four advice from Reili Aamodt and John Toven at Norwegian People's Aid:

- Think holistically. Focus on getting a dashboard in place where you can get a good overview and quickly see details in each system.
- Alerts are a central part of all monitoring, but equally important is the ability to plan ahead – and to predict situations before they occur.
- Start with the simple and achievable things. Then gradually expand by refining the solution.
- Apart from using great consultants, keep in mind that you need to spend time and resources yourself to install and get started with a system.