Case Study
AOK

»With the Fujitsu DCMA as a centralized monitoring solution, we can monitor all of our systems at once. This saves time and means we can be much more proactive. There have already been a number of occasions where we have been able to intervene before a problem leads to a breakdown or near miss«

Klaus Mayer, AOK Joint Data Center Bremen/Lower Saxony

The customer

Country: Germany
Industry: Insurance
Founded: 1884
Employees: 7,200
Website: www.aok.de/niedersachsen

The challenge

Consolidate various monitoring solutions to make the processes for monitoring the AOK Joint Data Center in Bremen/Lower Saxony more efficient and proactive.

The solution

Fujitsu Data Center Management & Automation (DCMA) targeted to monitor the heterogeneous system landscapes, including permanent status monitoring, storage and performance management.

The customer

AOK has been one of Germany's largest health insurance companies for over 130 years, focusing on creating a feeling of security for its customers and ensuring that they have access to comprehensive medical care should they fall ill. The AOK (Allgemeine Ortskrankenkasse, General Public Health Insurance) covers around 24 million people, almost a third of the German population. With an approximate market share of 35 percent, AOK is one of the largest companies in the statutory health insurance sector. AOK branches, in the states of Bremen and Lower Saxony, have merged their IT systems so that they can offer employees and members a more efficient service. The ARGE AOK-Rechenzentrum Bremen/Niedersachsen (AOK Joint Data Center Bremen/Lower Saxony) has its headquarters in Hannover and hosts data and applications for the AOK sites in these two states.

The challenge

AOK's Hannover data center employs some 30 administrators purely to monitor the IT system and ensure that the 2.7 million insured customers in Lower Saxony and Bremen can be managed and assisted. *"Of course, we have had monitoring tools in place for many years which collected a range of data,"* explains Klaus Mayer, Production Manager at the data center. *"But our operators always had to keep track of a number of different screens in order to monitor the different systems."* Proactive intervention was only possible to a small extent and measures for assigning warnings or other messages about the status of the data center resources were not working as efficiently as possible. AOK started looking for an environment consisting of six PRIMERGY blade servers fitted with 72 blades and three NetApp MetroClusters with 115 virtual machines to use as a monitoring solution for the entire system.

The solution

As the company's service provider and hardware and software supplier of many years, Fujitsu recommended the gradual implementation of Fujitsu DCMA. This management solution supports the consolidation of multiple monitoring and administration products into a single management cockpit. The project began with permanent status monitoring for all of the company's server, storage and network components.

The benefit

- Centralized, standardized monitoring for its heterogeneous IT environment
- Consolidation of various isolated solutions
- Saving time on monitoring large data centers
- High availability due to proactive and efficient monitoring

Products and services

- Enterprise IT management solution: Fujitsu Data Center Management & Automation (DCMA)
- Monitoring products: CA Spectrum, CA Virtual Assurance for Infrastructure Manager
- Blade servers: 6 x FUJITSU Server PRIMERGY BX900 S2 fitted with 72 x FUJITSU Server PRIMERGY BX920 S2/S3 Blade System
- Storage systems: 3 x NetApp MetroClusters
- Network: 8 x Cisco switches
- SAP operating concept: Fujitsu FlexFrame
- Services: Fujitsu DCMA Integration Services, Maintenance & Support

The benefit

AOK supports its customers in person in its network of branches as well as by telephone and online. The Hannover data center is the IT backbone for the regions of Lower Saxony and Bremen. *"We manage the IT landscape for some 7,000 AOK employees here,"* says Klaus Mayer. *"The degree of specialization is therefore very high, so if the IT system goes down for one employee this can be a disaster as their colleagues cannot automatically take over."* Each specialist must also be able to access customers' electronic files to answer their queries. This means that the applications must be available at all times.

Fujitsu began by implementing a traditional monitoring system which aims to keep all of the data center components running. AOK administrators can now call up all of the data generated by this system centrally via a console. *"With Fujitsu Data Center Management & Automation we have found an umbrella solution that has allowed us to bundle all of our monitoring processes together,"* explains Klaus Mayer. *"Now we can monitor all of the systems at once. That saves a lot of time as the employees no longer have to constantly switch from one system to another, and instead get notified of everything they need via a single system. This stabilizes error detection dramatically."*

Another benefit is the dedicated assignment of warning messages. The 30 administrators at the Hannover AOK data center are also no longer all responsible for everything and now have a more tightly defined range of duties than before. The Fujitsu DCMA solution is configured in such a way that the messages are sent only to the administrator responsible, via email or text message. *"This means that we no longer need a permanent on-site presence,"* says Mayer. *"As the Fujitsu DCMA gives us plenty of warning of an alarm status, an on-call system is now sufficient for us and nobody has to stay overnight in the data center to monitor the systems."*

"The second step for AOK was monitoring storage space. If a set threshold value is reached, the Fujitsu DCMA alerts the administrator responsible so that they can assign more storage space to the system. The final step is to integrate SAP performance monitoring. This involves connecting the Fujitsu DCMA to the FlexFrame for SAP infrastructure solution, which is based on a software virtualization and simplifies administration of SAP environments and also makes it more dynamic. It's no longer just about keeping the systems running, but also keeping response times reasonable," explains Klaus Mayer. *"If a specialist has to wait too long for a database query, this is detrimental to the customer experience."* Thanks to the performance monitoring system, the administrators can also readjust where needed, and therefore maintain a set service level. Fujitsu DCMA also means faster response times at AOK.

Conclusion

AOK's Hannover data center has benefitted from considerably increased reliability since the introduction of Fujitsu DCMA. The administrators can now intervene early to prevent errors. Almost all of the server and network components at the Hannover data center have now been added to the monitoring system with Fujitsu DCMA. Klaus Mayer is very pleased with the result and with how the solution was implemented:

"Fujitsu DCMA is an effective early warning system that supports proactive intervention. The availability of our applications has therefore improved as we minimize the amount of downtime we experience. Our cooperation with Fujitsu was very positive. The installation went completely according to plan within just a few days. Fujitsu DCMA can be configured down to the smallest details to meet our specific needs and requirements. We are also very happy with the support."