

Central Maine Power turned on to WhatsUp Gold

Utility companies demand near-perfect uptime of their networks. Central Maine Power is no exception.

Based in Augusta, Maine, Central Maine Power supplies electricity to more than 540,000 customers in an 11,000-square-mile area in the southwestern part of Maine, roughly bounded from Kittery to Bucksport to Jackman. With 1,300 employees at 30-plus locations, its computer network is comprised of hundreds of routers, servers, and devices that are used to provide electrical service to its customers.

Within Central Maine Power, the information technology group (IT) is charged with ensuring network stability, including meeting service level agreements with its internal customers through the use of the company's intranet. The IT group had been using Spectrum to help them meet this requirement. But, when Central Maine Power needed to monitor a unique SNMP device, the Spectrum system couldn't handle it. So, Central Maine Power's IT group turned off Spectrum and turned on WhatsUp Gold from Ipswitch, Inc.

It's been more than two years since Central Maine Power pulled the plug on Spectrum and their intranet has been static-free ever since. Central Maine Power uses WhatsUp Gold to monitor the intranet portion of its network. WhatsUp Gold is a network mapping, monitoring, notification, and reporting software that is used by a broad range of companies.

WhatsUp Gold's SmartScan auto-discovery feature allows network administrators to view maps and determine which devices are up or down. The product also notifies the network administrator by e-mail, pager, or telephone if a device or service goes down on their network so they can quickly remedy the problem. Comprehensive performance reports help administrators learn what the peak usage times are for their networks and allow them to make recommendations for changes to the network based on this data.

WhatsUp Gold monitors a wide range of services and devices at Central Maine Power including monitor-



ing ATM WAN switches, Cisco routers, hubs, switches, RF LAN access points, LDAP-based directory servers and legacy devices. It is also used to monitor the status of individual T1s at various sites.

WhatsUp Gold has also proven to be invaluable for Central Maine Power's employees who are off-site on service calls. "Our service technicians who are on the road upload or download their work orders from a wireless LAN box inside the service truck. These trucks communicate via centrally shared LAN-to-Radio devices. WhatsUp Gold pings each of these LAN boxes. If a box fails, WhatsUp Gold sends an alert. We can then work to get service to the box restored, so our employees can resume service calls to our customers," said Phil Morneault, network specialist at Central Maine Power. "We also monitor RF LAN access points as we have several 'lockups' a week. WhatsUp Gold has been a real time saver by immediately letting us know when there's a problem with a box. When the access point stops responding to pings, WhatsUp Gold sends an SNMP set to the APC unit to reset the power to the access point thus remotely restarting it."

"We like WhatsUp Gold a lot, particularly because it's Web-based," said Morneault. "Compared to what we had before, it's 200 percent better. WhatsUp Gold is quick and takes care of everything we need."
