



MAKING CONNECTIONS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA

Connect. At the University of Nebraska it's the operative word and overarching mission: to connect with others who share your interests and connect with award-winning faculty to prepare you for the life you choose to lead.

To the university's IT department, it has yet another meaning: to keep the component parts of the vast, campus network connected and both students and faculty connected – both to the network and to each other.

As Systems Administrator, George W. Blessing shoulders much of the responsibility for assuring 24x7 “connectivity.” His chief role is to manage the university's Windows-based file, print, DNS, and web servers. The IT team runs a gig-enabled network environment. Links to the buildings from their routing core are gigabit and each workstation on-campus has a 100mb/s connection.

In the beginning of 2004, the IT group was tasked with developing and implementing a migration plan to move people from a legacy Novell intraNetware departmental fileserver to a Windows fileserver that is part of their Enterprise Active Directory. Their legacy Novell environment controlled departmental folder quotas by imposing “folder” quotas. The quota management built into Windows is limited and inflexible, particularly given their requirements for folder-based storage restrictions. As any IT or systems administrator knows full well – particularly one working in a large university environment -- swelling tides of data can fast become a major headache and drain on resources. To George Blessing, this all boiled down to one fundamental goal: to keep all of the networks' “moving parts” connected and removing any and all roadblocks toward this single goal.

Blessing and his team were determined to find a third party quota management product for their new Windows-based departmental fileserver. They selected 3 products and evaluated them based on pricing, functionality, ease of use, support, and system impact.

“We chose Northern's SRM solution based on its flexible, easy-to-use quota management and robust reporting features -- something we never had with Novell -- and minimal impact on system resources.” said Blessing.

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They implemented Northern Quota Server in March 2004 and initially imposed “object” quotas on departmental file storage folders for nearly 15 departments. As the migration progressed, 10 more departments from the old server were added, and they expect to add more departments going forward.

“We particularly liked the features of the reporting module,” said Blessing. “I’ve configured the reporting module to send me an e-mail report each week that contains a current report of storage usage. This helps us with future planning and gives us a precise view of how departments are using their storage.”

Since responsive support was one of the main requirements in the evaluation process, we asked Blessing to rate Northern’s support.

“During our use of Quota Server and the reporting module, we haven’t had many opportunities to work with Northern Support as both pieces have worked flawlessly for us!,” said Blessing. “The only time I’ve ever talked with Northern Support was when I had a question regarding upgrading our software to the latest release. In this instance, my question was answered quickly and professionally. Product support is very important to us, since our IT staff is small due to past budget cuts. The ability of a company to adequately support their products is a prime consideration.”

Blessing ended our conversation with this: *“The people at Northern are great to work with, the product support is top-notch, and the Webinars that they hold periodically are very informational, helping both current and prospective customers keep up to date with Northern’s offerings and trends in the storage product industry. I would definitely recommend Quota Server and the storage report module to any organization that prizes functionality, ease-of-use and quality support.”*

We at Northern are pleased to play a continuing role in helping George Blessing and the University of Nebraska’s IT team keep everything and everyone connected.