

ARC INTERNATIONAL CASE STUDY



A quality service for global employees - at a significantly reduced cost

GOALS

- Reduce the cost of providing a company instant messaging capability
- Maintain a high quality of service for 5,000 global employees

SOLUTION

- Adopt an approach based purely on open source software
- Deploy a robust and scalable instant messaging server from ProcessOne

BENEFITS

- A significant reduction in annual IT costs, as well as lower international telephone expenses
- No change in functionality for global users, following the switch to open source software

Arc International knows a thing or two about quality. The company is the world leader in tableware, including glassware, dinnerware and cookware, for the mass market, as well as hotels and restaurants. Its brands - such as Luminarc®, Arcoroc®, Chef&Sommelier®, Pyrex®* and Cristal d'Arques Paris® - are renowned worldwide for their innovative design and fine craftsmanship. The Group also offers tailor made solutions for industry, advertising and customer loyalty programmes.

The company employs over 12,000 people around the world. Headquartered in France, it has manufacturing sites in Europe, China, the Middle East and North America, as well as offices everywhere from Ireland to the Philippines. In 2004, it became one of the first companies to pioneer the use of a corporate instant messaging system. Employees began to use this new communications technology extensively, but costs were high.

Consequently, when Arc International's contract with its instant messaging provider came up for renewal three years later, the company decided to seek out an alternative solution. It wanted to reduce its costs - but, at the same time, it didn't want to jeopardise the quality of service that its employees had become accustomed to.

TAKING AN OPEN SOURCE APPROACH

The company already used open source software in several other areas of its business, so it decided to try to find an open source approach to delivering an enterprise instant messaging capability. Philippe Taverne, systems and networks manager at Arc International, explains: "Today, there are many professional open source technologies that can be very valuable for businesses. We had used open source software very successfully in our business for several years, and this encouraged us to look for an open source solution for instant messaging."

In the course of researching instant messaging technologies, Arc International discovered the ProcessOne Instant Messaging Server. This high performance instant messaging software is based on ejabberd, an open source technology that is mainly written in the Erlang programming language. Arc International contacted ProcessOne and quickly established that this flexible and robust solution was precisely what the company was looking for.

Experts from ProcessOne worked alongside Arc International's in-house IT team to help it achieve its goals. They provided technical advice on how to deploy an ejabberd-based system and helped Arc International to integrate ejabberd tightly with other enterprise systems, such as the company's existing user name directory and authentication applications. "ProcessOne was able to come on-site to our business and support the set-up of the new solution," says Philippe Taverne. "The deployment was very easy due to the fact that we didn't have to define all of the users, because the ProcessOne Server was integrated with our Active Directory."

*Pyrex® is a trademark of Corning Inc., licensed by Arc International Cookware SAS in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

ARC INTERNATIONAL CASE STUDY

“The use of an open source solution has enabled us to realise important cost savings, without reducing the service provided to users.”

Philippe Taverne

systems and networks manager
Arc International



L'Art de la Table
1825

MAINTAINING A HIGH QUALITY SERVICE

Arc International had to ensure that its new instant messaging capability would be robust and scalable enough to handle thousands of concurrent users, while not placing a strain on the company's bandwidth, network and system resources. If the system were slow and unreliable, it would impede employees' ability to communicate with their international colleagues.

Fortunately, the ProcessOne Instant Messaging Server is ideal for large numbers of users, because ejabberd reliably supports tens of thousands of simultaneous users on a single node. Companies can elect to build clusters of multiple nodes within their instant messaging system, to deliver high performance to hundreds of thousands of people if necessary. “The ProcessOne Instant Messaging Server can easily handle communications between our 5,000 global employees on a single server, stored in France,” says Philippe Taverne. “It performs very strongly, and we don't need a lot of network and system resource to run it.”

Arc International elected to deploy ProcessOne's Instant Messaging Server in conjunction with PSI, an open source, multi-lingual instant messaging client. With its open source strategy, the company was able to offer exactly the same functionality that had been available to users with the company's previous instant messaging system. This minimised the need for user training and allowed users to continue to enjoy the same quality of service as before.

REALISING SIGNIFICANT COST SAVINGS

Following a short trial of the new system among users in the IT department, Arc International rolled it out to all of its 5,000 international employees. The system is now used by people right across the business, from manufacturing and distribution to marketing and finance. Employees can exchange messages with their colleagues in other countries, and the system records a history of the conversation. It is also possible to set up chat rooms, so that many employees from different locations can join together to share ideas and make plans.

Arc International encourages its employees to use instant messaging in place of telephoning their colleagues. The use of this tool is now embedded in the company's culture and helps to improve collaboration between globally dispersed teams. “Use of the ProcessOne Instant Messaging Server avoids the need for costly voice calls between China and France and enables us to reduce our international telephone expenses considerably,” says Philippe Taverne. “It also helps our employees to work together better.”

Because Arc International's new instant messaging system is built on open source software, the company can licence the technology free of charge. Arc International therefore enjoys significantly reduced annual IT costs. In summary, Philippe Taverne says: “The use of an open source solution has enabled us to realise important cost savings, without reducing the service provided to users. The ProcessOne Instant Messaging Server is reliable, robust and secure.”