CASE STUDY

A. H. Belo

The Customer

A. H. Belo Corporation owns and operates four daily newspapers: The Dallas Morning News, The Providence Journal, The Press-Enterprise (Riverside, CA) and the Denton Record-Chronicle. The company also owns and manages the various websites associated with these properties and other niche products.

Since 1842, A. H. Belo has prospered because of its relationship with its audiences. The company’s close community ties, strong journalistic reputation, and intense regional focus have been nurtured and expanded over time, resulting in powerful media brands and business opportunities that are not duplicated by competitors.

The Challenge

The publishing company previously relied on a BIND and an old Linux system to deliver domain name system (DNS), dynamic host configuration protocol (DHCP) and IP Address Management (IPAM). However, the system proved to be unreliable and consumed administration overhead.

These systems also lacked a user-friendly interface and were challenging to maintain. Frequent updates had to be made to the general operating system and numerous steps were required to process simple domain name record and DHCP changes.

Randy McEoin, Director of Network and Security at A. H. Belo, found Infoblox to be a solid decision to reduce manual-task related errors, improve network availability and increase visibility. For these reasons, he continued to further the company’s dependence upon Infoblox for their appliance-based DNS and DHCP solution with built-in IP address management (IPAM) and intuitive graphical user interface (GUI).

The Solution

McEoin’s IT team is very lean with only 1 dedicated resource for IP address management services, so establishing a network that was as automated and efficient as possible was critical.
A. H. Belo selected Infoblox-1050 appliances with Trinzic Grid. The Grid technology links a collection of appliances into a unified, centrally-managed platform. Benefits include resilient DNS and DHCP service delivery, unified management and real-time, secure, system-wide updates.

A. H. Belo originally deployed two HA pairs at Riverside, California and Dallas, Texas. In 2011 they deployed another HA pair to Providence, Rhode Island. These boxes are managing all centrally via Grid connection and Infoblox's intuitive GUI. The devices also leverage Infoblox's built-in IP address management functionality, which allows them to track IP addresses that are given out throughout the entire network. Prior to Infoblox, it was difficult to have any reliable knowledge of the IP address allocations.

“Infoblox's solutions have made it possible for us to scale and address all the issues with our previous DNS, DHCP and IPAM systems,” said McEoin. He was particularly impressed with the Infoblox solution’s high availability features, central management, easy updates/patching, ‘one-button’ disaster recovery capability and Grid™ technology.

McEoin added, “We recently performed an upgrade from 6.1 to 6.2 because a recent BIND challenge and it was really simple to do. With Infoblox, I am confident and have no fear about any outage windows.”

A. H. Belo will soon deploy Infoblox Trinzic NetMRI, an automated solution that will provide the newspaper company with a complete audit of the network on a daily basis. Automated reports provide great insight to the overall health, giving a quick snap shot of A.H. Belo's network strengths and the areas that need attention. A scorecard also includes a configuration report that allows McEoin to compare current configurations with previous ones.

The Results
The Infoblox Trinzic with Grid and NetMRI solution was easy to deploy and simple to upgrade because it eliminates the need to install and manage an operating system and offers an intuitive graphical user interface (GUI). DNS and DHCP services are now easily delivered by a purpose-built, HA appliance that is inherently secure, reliable and scalable, freeing network administration resources for these critical network services.

McEoin’s task of managing the newspaper's IP addresses also has simplified tremendously. He no longer manually assigns IP addresses nor does he keep track of them in spreadsheets. The Infoblox appliances allow him to track IP address allocation in real-time and view the address scheme across the entire network with visual maps and easily filtered segments.

McEoin concluded, “Business continuity is essential to us. We can now instantly and routinely obtain vital, real-time data about our network 24/7.”