

NUI Galway Gets an Education from Quest in Consolidating its IT Platforms on Time and Automating User Provisioning, Saving €40K Annually

The National University of Ireland (NUI) Galway was established in 1845 and now has more than 17,000 students and 2,200 staff members. NUI Galway's IT partner, PFH Technology Group, worked with Quest Software to address the university's tough IT consolidation, migration, administration and automation challenges.

The Challenge

NUI Galway wanted to unify its disparate IT environments into one centrally managed platform based on Microsoft Active Directory (AD) 2008. The diversity had arisen over several years as different systems were developed to address various short-term needs. This had resulted in four different environments based on combinations of AD, Novell Directory Services (NDS) and Microsoft Exchange. To access systems running in these different environments, users needed different identities; this was unnecessarily complicated for the users and a headache for IT staff to manage. Plus, with large numbers of students arriving and leaving the university each academic year, manual user provisioning was excessively time-consuming and prone to human error.

NUI Galway's goal was to have a single, centrally managed AD in order to simplify administration and maintenance, automate user provisioning, reduce overhead costs and improve security. In addition, several new IT projects had been identified, including chargeable AD account-based printing, student ID cards and parking permits; NUI Galway recognised that a simplified IT environment would facilitate smoother and faster execution of these projects.

NUI Galway engaged the services of Microsoft to design its new AD structure, and a single domain model to include both staff and student accounts was recommended. Whilst this model would simplify administration, the implementation would need to address the threat of security breaches, such as unauthorised access to confidential information like the university's payment system, exam details and grades. Other project requirements included forensic auditing capabilities to improve security.

PFH Technology Group, a large provider of ICT solutions in Ireland, was selected by the university to deliver the project. Having undertaken several similar projects, PFH recognised that the consolidation project would benefit from the use of specialist solutions. "Amalgamating Novell and a number of different AD domains is an extremely cumbersome and complex task, and a manual approach would have been a bridge too far," said Paul Large, CTO at PFH Technology Group. "With a tight and immovable deadline of four months, based on the start of a new academic year, and other projects depending on the success of this consolidation, we needed to simplify the approach in order to give ourselves the best chance of success."

The Quest Solution

PFH recommended Quest Software's specialist solutions for IT consolidation, migration, administration and automation, having worked successfully with them on other projects. NUI Galway was familiar with Quest and felt comfortable with PFH's decision to adopt the vendor's solutions, which consisted of NDS Migrator, Migration Manager for Active Directory, Quest One ActiveRoles® and ChangeAuditor® for Active Directory.

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— Paul Large
CTO
PFH Technology Group

OVERVIEW



OÉ Gaillimh
NUI Galway

Headquarters

Galway, Ireland

Services

Education

Critical Needs

To consolidate disparate IT environments to Microsoft Exchange and Active Directory and automate user provisioning

Solution

NDS Migrator, Migration Manager for Active Directory, Quest One ActiveRoles, ChangeAuditor for Active Directory

Results

- Ensured smooth migrations with no unplanned downtime or lost data
- Ensured migration was completed before deadline, saving €25,000
- Reduced IT workload by three-quarters of a full-time equivalent (FTE), saving €40,000 annually
- Enabled fast resolution of issues and prevention of bigger problems
- Delivered new IT environment that will facilitate simpler, faster and cheaper future project execution

CASE STUDY

NDS Migrator accelerates and simplifies migrations from NDS to AD, from complete account, group and organizational unit (OU) migration to file and directory migration and synchronisation. Migration Manager for Active Directory enables the efficient migration and restructuring of AD, ensuring coexistence between migrated and un-migrated users. Quest One ActiveRoles provides out-of-the-box user and group account management for complete identity administration, delegation and security for AD; it also provides strictly enforced role-based security, automated group management, workflow and easy-to-use Web interfaces for self-service. ChangeAuditor for Active Directory proactively tracks, audits, reports and alerts on vital configuration changes in real time and without the overhead of native auditing.

The Bottom Line

NUI Galway's consolidation migrations ran smoothly without downtime or data loss. "Students often have erratic work schedules, so the university provides users with around-the-clock system access," explained Large. "A key requirement of the consolidation project was no unplanned downtime, and the Quest migration solutions ensured that this was met. We also used the rollback capabilities during the project, which ensured that no data was lost."

Despite the tight four-month deadline, the consolidation project was completed on time. "Without the migration solutions, we would have needed to physically visit thousands of workstations; this would not have been possible in the time available and would have cost NUI Galway at least €25,000 in additional consultancy," said Large. "The Quest solutions enabled us to automate the migration process and remotely synchronise users and data, saving us valuable time and ensuring we didn't miss the deadline."

In addition, Quest One ActiveRoles has automated identity administration, reducing the pressure on IT and delivering significant cost savings. "The time savings we've gained equate to resource savings – half a full-time equivalent (FTE) on the support desk and a quarter FTE at the third level of support," explained Sean O'Farrell, ISS director, NUI Galway. "This amounts to annual savings of approximately €40,000."

ChangeAuditor for Active Directory enforces the security design whilst maintaining the delegated admin rights of Quest One ActiveRoles. "For instance, the solution highlighted that a change to a large number of accounts had been made, which was causing issues," explained Large. "Upon investigation, we found that the change had been made in error and was immediately rectified. This

supports the theory that around 90 percent of a cure is the diagnosis and demonstrates how ChangeAuditor for Active Directory's audit trail can pay dividends very quickly."

Whilst ROI was not a driver for this project, the value of the project will continue to rise, due to the ongoing benefits of NUI Galway's new environment. "Now that we have a single IT platform, our forthcoming projects will become more straightforward to execute and, once implemented, the new systems will be far simpler to manage," noted O'Farrell. "The Quest solutions support our view that it's faster, cheaper and simpler to use a specialised IT tool rather than to attempt a task manually."

About NUI Galway

NUI Galway was established in 1845 and is now one of Ireland's foremost centres of academic excellence, with more than 17,000 students and 2,200 staff members. NUI Galway offers a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate degrees and diplomas of international standard, and has developed a distinguished reputation for both teaching and research excellence in many fields. For more information, visit www.nuigalway.ie.

About PFH Technology Group

PFH Technology Group is Ireland's largest independent provider of ICT solutions to corporate, government, health and higher education organisations, and has over 1,400 customers. With 237 employees and offices in Dublin, Cork, Galway and Belfast, PFH Technology Group delivers services throughout Ireland. For more information, visit www.pfh.ie.



PFH Technology Group

About Quest Software, Inc.

Established in 1987, Quest Software (Nasdaq: QSFT) provides simple and innovative IT management solutions that enable more than 100,000 global customers to save time and money across physical and virtual environments. Quest products solve complex IT challenges ranging from database management, data protection, identity and access management, monitoring, and user workspace management to Windows management. For more information, visit www.quest.com.



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