

Your On Demand
IT Resource.



VeriCenter, eTouch Propel NASA Portals, Web sites to New Frontiers

PROBLEM

Since it was formed by an act of Congress in 1958, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration has many scientific and technological accomplishments to its credit – in both air and space. Its technology also has been adapted for many non-aerospace uses, and NASA remains a leading force in scientific research and in aerospace exploration.

Today, NASA is forging new horizons in its exploration of space and its work on the International Space Station. People from around the world stay informed about space missions and raise their level of scientific knowledge through the NASA Web site (www.nasa.gov). NASA employees also stay connected through a complex series of portals and intranets.

The content on these sites is managed using powerful software from eTouch Systems (www.etchouch.net), which addresses NASA's business design needs. eTouch makes a content management system (CMS) for NASA, empowering non-technical users to contribute and edit content using pre-defined and customizable templates with an easy-to-use graphical interface. eTouch provides an intuitive way to manage Web content.

“Our NASA engagement involves a highly complex environment with significant security requirements,” said Dave Valliere, Program Manager at eTouch Systems. “VeriCenter ties it all together and has enabled us to meet the increasing demand for Web content.”

The Fremont, Calif.-based technology firm and its partners also enable NASA to cache certain data to reduce the immediate impact on its Web servers during peak periods. For example, one billion people accessed the NASA Web site in January 2004 for the landing of the Mars rover, which transmitted high-resolution photographs of the red planet and dazzled space followers across the planet.

While eTouch is responsible for content management and distribution, NASA also outsources its IT infrastructure to a managed services provider. Before the Mars rover landing, NASA and eTouch assessed enterprise hosting providers on their abilities to deliver IT infrastructure based on reliability, managed services and customer support.

NASA and eTouch selected VeriCenter, Inc., for enterprise hosting, managed services and disaster recovery initiatives in late 2003. VeriCenter was selected for its operational excellence, experience in large-scale data center engagements, and security.

SOLUTION

VeriCenter offered a 100 percent network availability guarantee and managed services that could scale rapidly as NASA's infrastructure needs changed. With NASA facing unprecedented demand for Web site access, VeriCenter has employed a utility computing strategy to handle spikes in Web traffic and to ensure that millions of space buffs can follow these historic events.

VeriCenter hosts 50+ NASA servers and two million NASA Web pages across its data centers in the U.S. for various NASA entities, including NASA Headquarters, the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Marshall Space Flight Center, the Glenn Research Center, Ames Research Center, and others.

VeriCenter's distributed, high-availability, data center network allows NASA to focus its resources on critical business issues by leveraging VeriCenter's secure enterprise hosting and on-demand services.

RESULTS

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VeriCenter has enabled NASA to drive down IT costs while improving service to its growing list of constituents, which include employees, partner companies and space aficionados.

In late 2004, NASA renewed its contract with eTouch and VeriCenter for 30 months, and effectively doubled the footprint for enterprise hosting services.

Four months later, VeriCenter completed a DNS (domain naming system) cutover resulting in the InsideNASA portal going live within VeriCenter data centers. The InsideNASA portal gives NASA employees and contractors access to a wide variety of data necessary to do their work and meet agency objectives. InsideNASA represents a core part of NASA's knowledge management system and initiative, and is built on eTouch's technology and solutions.

As NASA prepares for its Return to Flight with Shuttle Discovery this summer, VeriCenter will employ a utility computing strategy to handle spikes in demand for bandwidth, storage and server capacity.

