Greater Manchester Police doesn't miss a beat

NONSTOP SERVERS BACK UP U.K. POLICE FORCE

>> Whether the Greater Manchester Police is providing day-to-day policing services to the people of Greater Manchester, maintaining order at fuel price demonstrations, or keeping the peace at the XVII Commonwealth Games to be hosted by Greater Manchester in 2002, one thing is certain: The police force will be able to respond swiftly and reliably, with a comprehensive policing service based on Compaq *NonStop*™ *Himalaya*™ systems. More than 2.5 million citizens in Greater Manchester, a metropolitan area of northwest England, rely on the ability to dial 999 for immediate assistance in case of an emergency.

To handle those urgent calls, the Greater Manchester Police (GMP) depends on the continuous availability of its new *NonStop Himalaya* S-series servers.

"The availability, 24 hours per day and 7 days per week, of appropriate IT systems to help our 7,500 officers and 3,000 support staff do their jobs is a critical requirement," explained Ian Wood, assistant IT director for GMP.

"In particular," he continued, "the force considers it vital to have a robust platform to deliver our main command and control system that enables policing within Greater Manchester. We chose a *NonStop Himalaya* solution, with its focus on fault tolerance and resilience, to meet the demands of operational staff for a reliable and highly available primary IT system."

With its Greater Manchester Police Computer System (GMPICS) application, GMP handles some 3,700 incidents and records 1,200 crimes per day in the busiest metropolitan force in Great Britain and the second-largest force in the United Kingdom. GMP's geographically diverse "beat" spans almost 500 square miles, ranging from open tracts of moorland with rural communities to large inner-city areas.

The Operational Information System database on GMP's *NonStop* system stores details of around 330,000 persons or items of property. The Vehicle Information System database holds records of 500,000 stolen vehicles each year. In addition, the *NonStop* system supports Police National Computer access and duties and resources.

Migration improves service and scalability

GMP has been a Compaq customer since 1989. Over the years, *NonStop* servers have proved to be reliable and robust for the organization. Recently, however, GMP's existing *NonStop Himalaya* K-series server was beginning to reach capacity.

For Greater Manchester Police, NonStop systems:

- *Provide a robust, scalable platform for its main command and control system*
- *Deliver a reliable business continuity solution with clear cost-of-ownership benefits*
- *Manage ever-expanding databases of critical person, property, and incident records*

To keep up with business demands, GMP sought to increase rapidly the number of potential client access points from the configuration limit of 1,600 to 5,000 PCs distributed across more than 100 locations. In addition, for business continuity purposes, GMP wanted to minimize downtime on its live system, in the event of an outage or planned maintenance shutdown. On the other hand, the lifespan of the force's current application had at least another five years.

Keeping all of these factors in mind, Sionet International, a Compaq Business Critical Solution partner specializing in the *NonStop* system environment, provided a proposal that demonstrated clear cost-of-ownership benefits of a *NonStop Himalaya* S-series server over the next five years while delivering a business continuity solution. Consequently, GMP decided to migrate to the *NonStop Himalaya* S-series server.

Through Sionet, Compaq supplied a six-processor *NonStop Himalaya* S74006 production system and an S740 development system, providing a cost-effective solution that supported GMP's business plans. Sionet also worked with GMP in the planning, deployment, and management of the migration to ensure a smooth transition. The systems went live in less than four months.

Enhanced application reliability

The proposal for GMP's new system included the use of Compaq Remote Database Facility (RDF) software as well as *NonStop* AutoTMF and *NonStop* AutoSYNC products developed by Carr Scott Software. These products, combined with the new hardware, have provided the force with its first true business continuity solution. GMP is one of the first customers to use the *NonStop* AutoTMF and *NonStop* AutoSYNC products. (For more information on these products, see story on page 40.)

"The operational case for a business continuity solution was extremely compelling," explained Wood, "because the 24 x 7 x 365 nature of police work requires that we avoid any unnecessary unavailability of the system. With our new configuration, a fully operational, live application can be ready within one hour, should the primary server become unavailable.

"These features make a vital contribution to the support of operational officers in carrying out their duties and serving the public of Greater Manchester," said Wood. He added that another benefit of the implementation—part of its unmatched total cost of ownership—was a reduction in software and hardware costs.

Moving forward

By migrating to the *NonStop Himalaya* S-series server, GMP can get the full mileage from its current GMPICS application and also remove the limitation on the number of GMPICS client sessions, allowing for the maximum requirement of sessions configured for all of the force's 5,000 workstations.

Looking to the future, GMP has a clearly defined technical architecture that must be adhered to when delivering new applications and solutions. Compaq *NonStop* technology and other products are the preferred server platforms in this architecture.

"We plan to increase significantly our use of the Internet in the coming years to provide greater access to the public, and availability of a Web solution will be important," said Wood. "Our preferred server architecture, from Compaq's NonStop Division, will of course play a part in the delivery of systems and services." ■