Case Study
Switch and Data

A facility isn't always one single brick and mortar building. When you are responsible for ensuring the continuous operation of thirty-two remote locations, your facility becomes an extensive network of industrial equipment and computing devices. A single pane of glass that allows you to supervise and control that equipment from one centralized location is invaluable. For a reliable, integrative, affordable solution, Switch and Data looks to RLE Technologies.

The Importance of Environmental and Industrial Equipment Monitoring

Monitoring an infrastructure proactively on an integrated, real-time network helps businesses avoid the costly outages and downtime associated with unplanned failures in facility equipment. As enterprise facilities become more distributed and managers find themselves monitoring even more remote facilities, this diligent, timely monitoring becomes even more important.

Now that companies have centralized monitoring for their IT networks, they are looking to create an integrated network that will monitor the environmental parameters and industrial equipment in their facilities as well. This provides them a tighter level of control without increasing operational costs. Switch and Data's Operations Asset Management (OAM) group was seeking this single pane of glass when it launched its search for an enterprise monitoring solution for its remote data centers.

Complete a Thorough Needs Assessment

Switch and Data provides premium quality, neutral interconnection and colocation services to network enterprises and service providers. It operates the largest footprint of any neutral provider in North America with interconnection choices to the most diverse selection of network providers. Their OAM group is headed by Charles Browning, Switch and Data's VP of Operations, and is responsible for ensuring the continuous operation of thirty-two remote locations within Switch and Data's footprint. The twelve person OAM team manages the ongoing monitoring of the mission-critical equipment at each of these sites.

Switch and Data developed a set of requirements for building a reliable, state of the art and cost effective, integrated monitoring solution. Their goal was to further demonstrate the company's long standing commitment to best practices across site management, responsiveness, and risk aversion. To do this they needed a system that would:

- Provide a united view of both physical and environmental parameters.
- Be easily configurable to adapt to the inherent uniqueness of each site.
- Allow multiple notification and adjustable escalation for immediate response.
- Modularly expand and scale as the network grows.
- Include pre-integrated support for a wide range of devices.
- Leverage their standard IP network.
- Utilize standard protocols that interface directly and easily with both network management systems (NMS) and building management systems (BMS).
- Interface with and control existing industrial equipment and devices.

Weigh the Pros and Cons

While several vendors met many of the established criteria, Browning found that most

solutions were not as user friendly and cost effective for enterprise wide monitoring and control of industrial equipment and devices found in a mission critical environment as RLE's Falcon Facilities Monitoring System (FMS) and environmental sensors.

A User Friendly Solution Pays Off

While some solutions had greater capability, they were more complex, required extensive training, had additional hidden costs, and created an increased reliance on outside vendors. In contrast, the FMS combines ease of use, scalability, flexibility, and integration friendly design in a single package.

Browning explains, "The FMS's system functionality is easy to understand and integrates seamlessly with other monitoring software applications. As a result, we have been able to expand the alarming and monitoring capabilities and enhance our ability to be much more proactive."

The FMS provided the best "bang for the buck," giving Switch and Data's OAM team the ability to cost effectively design and implement a do-it-yourself monitoring solution. Compared to other solutions, it was also the only system that did not require specialized training or a service agreement, and thus minimized Switch and Data's reliance on an outside vendor.

Pulling All The Pieces Together

The FMS provided a scalable enterprise solution that enabled Switch and Data to unite all of its environmental and physical equipment monitoring across all thirty-two sites into one, manageable proactive system accessible from anywhere, anytime. With the FMS, Browning and his team can monitor all of their mission critical equipment at their remote facilities with a unified view via a simple web browser, thus improving their asset management through understanding the real time condition of their equipment.

"The new system allows us to view many additional monitoring points and make adjustments remotely," adds Browning.

Moreover, they can respond proactively and immediately by configuring escalation and alarm conditions to provide notification in real time via email or text.

Appreciating That Single Pane of Glass

Currently, RLE's FMS systems and sensors are deployed across a majority of Switch and Data's footprint. Within each site, the FMS is tailored to the equipment that is being monitored, including power, temperature, humidity, smoke, and IP camera. With the built-in integration capability for Modbus, BACNet, and SNMP, the FMS at each site is connected to Switch and Data's What's Up Gold Network Management System.

"RLE's FMS has exceeded all our expectations and plays an integral part of our overall monitoring strategy by giving us real time information about the condition of our remote facilities infrastructure," comments Mr. Browning. "RLE stands behind their products 100%, and they have been very willing to work with our other suppliers to create a total monitoring and analysis solution."

RLE Technologies
104 Racquette Drive, Fort Collins, CO 80524
800.518.1519 | rletech.com
sales@rletech.com