

R.J. O'BRIEN

By Mark Nelson and Bob Rice

AN UPGRADED DOMAIN AND EMAIL ARCHITECTURE IMPROVES RELIABILITY, FUNCTIONALITY, AND ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE IN A TIME-SENSITIVE INDUSTRY.

In the financial trading arena, accessibility and ability to communicate can make the difference in meeting or missing expectations. When R.J. O'Brien wanted to upgrade its email infrastructure to maximize reliability and future growth prospects, West Monroe Partners was ready with an approach that enabled it to get there in just three months.

R.J. O'BRIEN.

Founded in 1914, R.J. O'Brien is a privately owned, well-diversified Futures Commission Merchant with client assets exceeding \$1 billion. R.J. O'Brien is one of the oldest and best known independent futures brokerage firms in the industry. It is a founding member of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME), Commodity Exchange of New York, and the New York Board of Trade. R.J. O'Brien's diversified client base enables it to regularly capture top-tier market share in both agriculture and financial futures products at both the CME and the Chicago Board of Trade.

R.J. O'Brien offers the latest in order-entry technology, coupled with 24-hour execution and clearing on every futures exchange worldwide. It services a nationwide network of more than 245 introducing brokers and some of the world's largest financial, industrial, and agricultural institutions. Its market position is unique in that it offers clients a trading platform that facilitates futures trading on all electronic and pit-traded markets.

GOAL: A HIGH-AVAILABILITY EMAIL ENVIRONMENT.

As an organization touted for its investment in trading and order-entry technology, R.J. O'Brien has made significant commitment to building its electronic and "open outcry" trading architecture. Poised for significant growth over the next few years, the company has taken proactive steps to ensure its infrastructure is aligned with its expected future capacity, as well as structured to minimize unplanned outages. One key aspect of that infrastructure is email.

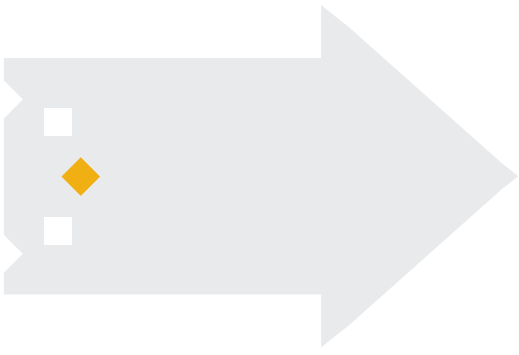
R.J. O'Brien conducts a considerable amount of business using email—relying heavily on its communication system for contacts with current and prospective customers, industry contacts, and employees on trading floors throughout the country.

In contrast to its trading architecture, R.J. O'Brien's internal domain and email infrastructure were dated and soon to be unsupported. To align its email infrastructure with its high-availability requirements, R.J. O'Brien sought to upgrade its domain and email architecture to a Microsoft Exchange environment.

TAPPING AN EXPERIENCED PARTNER.

R.J. O'Brien chose West Monroe Partners as its partner for this migration. West Monroe Partners not only offered a solid understanding of R.J. O'Brien's business needs and infrastructure from previous projects, it had significant experience with similar migrations and relevant expertise with clustering technologies and storage attached networks. Together, R.J. O'Brien and West Monroe Partners designed a solution that provided:

- ◆ Hardware and software redundancy that would reduce susceptibility to major email outages due to the failure of any individual component.
- ◆ Full mail functionality at R.J. O'Brien's disaster recovery site in the event its primary location experiences a complete failure.
- ◆ Enhanced email functionality to support R.J. O'Brien's dispersed workforce.
- ◆ An efficient migration process to the new environment that respected the trading industry's stringent up-time requirements.



TECHNOLOGYSOLUTIONS

COLLABORATING TO DELIVER RESULTS.

Using a proven methodology and a collaborative approach, West Monroe Partners completed the design and migration over a three-month period.

Requirements gathering

West Monroe Partners conducted interviews with each member of R.J. O'Brien's executive team to understand business needs and expected service levels for the new infrastructure. The team also worked closely with R.J. O'Brien's IT staff to understand the current domain and email environment and to research potential high-availability email cluster architectures.

Clustering software selection

The team identified appropriate software for high-availability email architecture, including creating a 'proof of concept' for email clustering software to demonstrate the benefits of a high-availability software suite. It then selected vendors to support needs for both the storage area network (SAN) and synchronous data replication to R.J. O'Brien's disaster recovery center.

Design

The design team identified all hardware, software, and licensing needs and defined configurations for the new environment. It also designed the migration process, including tool selection, connectivity between environments, and mail fidelity.

TECHNOLOGIES EMPLOYED:

Windows NT Server, Windows 2000 Server, Windows 2003 Server, Microsoft Exchange 5.5, Microsoft Exchange 2003, Outlook Web Access, Secure Socket Layer (SSL), Active Directory, Microsoft Active Directory Connector, Microsoft Windows NT/2000/XP, Microsoft Office Suite including Microsoft Outlook, MXLogic, Veritas Storage Foundations for Windows High Availability 4.2, Cisco MDS 9120 Fibre Channel Switches, Network Appliance FAS 920c Filer, Network Appliance FAS 940 Filer, Network Appliance Data ONTAP 7.

Build

The team then ordered, set up, configured, and tested all hardware and software, including the SAN, fiber-channel switches, servers, Microsoft Active Directory, Microsoft Exchange, and Veritas Storage Foundations for Windows High Availability.

Migration

West Monroe Partners migrated 400 users' email and directory accounts to the new environment with minimal weekend downtime. It also tested fail-over of the high-availability mail environment to the disaster recovery site.

Support

Finally, West Monroe Partners provided on-site support for several days after the migration. It also documented every phase of the project to ensure that R.J. O'Brien's IT staff was equipped to support the new environment going forward.

GREATER RELIABILITY. GREATER FUNCTIONALITY.

R.J. O'Brien's new domain and email environment have produced several significant benefits:

- ◆ The new environment requires one directory; the previous environment required two.
- ◆ Each user now has a reliable, full-featured web interface for his/her mailbox, as well as improved remote services through Outlook Web Access and accessibility of email and calendars via PDA devices. The previous environment did not have the same level of reliability, nor did it permit advanced email tasks.
- ◆ Users now receive 99 percent less unsolicited commercial email ("spam").
- ◆ Finally, and perhaps most significantly, R.J. O'Brien can fail its entire email environment over to its disaster recovery facility in less than two minutes.

West Monroe Partners is an international, full-service business and technology consulting firm focused on guiding organizations through projects that fundamentally transform their business. With the experience to create the most ambitious visions as well as the skills to implement the smallest details of our clients' most critical projects, West Monroe Partners is a proven provider of growth and efficiency to large enterprises, as well as more nimble middle-market organizations. Our more than 300 consulting professionals drive better business results by harnessing our collective experience across a range of industries, serving clients out of offices across the United States and Canada.