



Compaq Services

Always Thinking Ahead

Business Critical Services

Testimonial:

Thoreau Institute



COMPAQ

Better answers

Bringing Walden to the World

Compaq Business Critical Services helps Thoreau Institute put collection online. At the end of a small private drive in Concord, Massachusetts, about a half-mile from Walden Pond, stands a new state-of-the-art archives and media center. Inside is the world's foremost collection of Henry David Thoreau writings and related materials.

"Thoreau has such an incredible influence on people, it's critically important to us to be able to reach out to audiences worldwide, whether they are students, scholars, or just interested folks," says Kathi Anderson, Executive Director at the Thoreau Institute. "Technology has enabled us to open the doors of this institution to the world."

Today 400 to 500 people from countries all over the world visit the www.walden.org site every day – many more than could physically visit the center. The idea of making the Institute's multi-million dollar collections accessible online came naturally to Dr. Brad Dean, Thoreau scholar and Director of the Institute's Media Center, who had long used the Internet to do his research.

In search of the world's best data server. Dean knew creating the Web site he envisioned would require a very fast, robust and sophisticated database engine. His own desktop computer held two gigabytes of Thoreau scholarship. And digitizing the manuscripts and many images in the collection would require a database many times that size.

"I set out to find the best database server in the world," says Dean. "I did quite a bit of research. I called up friends in universities. I talked to people in different professions. Almost uniformly, the answer was: "Get an Alpha server."

While choosing Alpha was fairly easy, Dean, a Macintosh user and scholar, not an IS professional, found the challenge of building and managing a very large Windows NT database and Web site daunting. So he turned to Compaq Services for help.

Getting up to speed with Windows NT. Compaq Services responded with a team of database, Windows NT, and Internet experts – including an on-site engineer to work side-by-side with Dean to help determine, design, and deploy the best information technology solutions for the Institute.

"Compaq is critical to our ability to keep the media center up and running and functioning fully 24 hours a day, seven days a week."

-Kathi Anderson, Executive Director, Thoreau Institute

"Men are born to succeed, not fail."

-Henry David Thoreau

Today the Institute relies on an Alpha Web server running Microsoft Internet Information Server and Microsoft Site Server to pull requested information from a 200 gigabyte SQL database server and display it through a browser for visitors to the site.

In addition to the Alpha database and Web servers, Compaq Services helped the Institute to set up a redundant set of Intel-based Priors servers running the site's Internet security and firewall. It helped deploy a Microsoft Exchange based enterprise mail and messaging



system which enables collaboration via the Internet News Service and supports dial-in capabilities for remote staff or scholars. And it helped install a suite of Microsoft BackOffice applications.

“When I first started, I knew nothing at all about Windows NT,” says Dean. “Of course we had problems, we built the system from the ground up. But when you’re working with the kind of knowledgeable people that I’ve been working with, the problems are almost not problems. All I do is call Compaq and say, we have this problem and they come in and iron it out very quickly.”

Onsite support – and a world of expertise. “I’ve had the luxury of an onsite engineer, and behind her, all the resources of a worldwide organization that I can simply tap into,” says Dean. “I’ve worked very, very closely with people in Compaq Services. I’ve found them all uniformly helpful and friendly. They’re astonishingly knowledgeable. They’re certified. And they’re able to dig down into the complexities and fix problems.”

In addition to helping develop and deploy Web-based Windows NT solutions, Compaq Services has helped the Institute address issues of long-term data integrity that arise with archival information expected to be accessible for hundreds of years.

Compaq Services is also working on a project to combine database query and Web search into a new kind of hybrid data search engine that will help both scholars and other visitors to find information and share knowledge more quickly and easily.

And Compaq Services has worked with the Institute to design and go live with a secure, high-performance e-store that enables visitors to shop for and purchase Thoreau memorabilia online.

Virtually 100% uptime with Business Critical Services. In addition to making the vast amounts of data and images in the Thoreau collections available to the widest possible audience, the Institute felt it was important that the site be up and available around the world -- at any time of the day or night.

To meet these needs, Compaq delivers Business Critical support services that include 24x7 coverage, on-site engineering, proactive monitoring to predict and remedy problems before they can impact system performance, and a guaranteed rapid response from a dedicated off-site technical support team.

“Public awareness is key to getting people interested enough to give to a cause,” explains Anderson. “The more people we can reach obviously the greater the ability to achieve our fundraising goals. Compaq is critical to our ability to keep the media center up and running and function fully 24 hours a day, seven days a week.”

Compaq has been able to deliver virtually 100% uptime, says Dean.

“From my perspective the single biggest thing Compaq Services offers is peace of mind,” says Dean. “Because I’m sitting on some astonishing research. And without this kind of support, I literally wouldn’t be able to sleep at night. For me, it’s a quality of life issue.”

“Compaq Services put the infrastructure in place that enables one person who’s not an expert to run a large and sophisticated technological environment.”

-Brad Dean, Media Center Director, Thoreau Institute

“Every day I’m amazed at what we’ve achieved and how quickly. Compaq Services has been instrumental in helping us create this media center in a very short period of time.”

-Kathi Anderson, Executive Director, Thoreau Institute

Knowledge transfer and ongoing support. In addition to ensuring optimal uptime, Compaq’s remote intelligent monitoring tools, which can identify potential problems, issue alerts, and initiate preventive and recovery procedures, also help manage the systems over time. “One of my primary goals has been to ensure the environment can be easily maintained and managed with the help of offsite support services from Compaq when we’re no longer onsite,” says Frannie Hodge, the Compaq Services Software Systems Consultant who has been providing on-site support to the Thoreau Institute. In addition to hands-on knowledge transfer and proactive monitoring tools, the site is configured so that offsite Compaq support specialists can connect to systems via the Internet or dial up to check on tasks or help resolve issues.

“Compaq Services put the infrastructure in place that enables one person who’s not an expert to run a large and sophisticated technological environment,” says Dean. Instead of having to go around and physically check all of the machines, for example, he relies on Compaq to monitor them remotely.

“I can have a little reminder come up on my window that says it’s time to change my backup tapes, for instance,” says Dean. “That’s a tremendous advantage for me.”

Smoothing the move to Windows 2000. Compaq Services is also helping the Institute manage change over time. An onsite Compaq Service tool, for example, automatically tracks all changes – from a new version of software, to a new printer, to a new IP address. Maintaining an accurate and up-to-date configuration of the site simplifies both system management and service.

And Hodge and her team are working to ensure smooth migration to Windows 2000 with upgrade planning that examines every aspect – and the potential impact – of moving to the new software.

A cutting edge solution – quickly. “Thanks to Compaq Services, we have a cutting-edge research environment that’s the envy of everybody who comes and takes a look around,” says Dean.

“Every day I’m amazed at what we’ve achieved and how quickly,” says Anderson. “Compaq Services has been instrumental in helping us create this media center in a very short period of time.”

Would Thoreau be pleased to see his works being broadcast worldwide, 24 hours a day, seven days a week to the world? Dean believes so.

“Thoreau used the best technology that was available during his lifetime to get his word out – the printing press, the book, the magazine. We’re using the best of today’s technology to bring his writings to a far, far larger number of people.”