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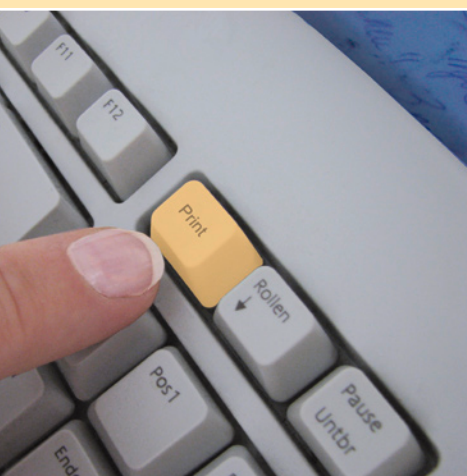# NETWORK
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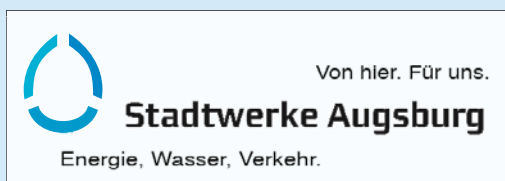
Stadtwerke Augsburg **(Municipal Utilities)**

March 2009

Robust Allrounders – SEH Print Servers at the Stadtwerke Augsburg

Stadtwerke Augsburg at a Glance

The Stadtwerke Augsburg (Augsburg municipal utilities, Germany) is the third largest modern municipal utility in Bavaria, Germany. About 1,800 employees provide water, energy, and public transport for more than 350,000 people in the Augsburg area. A well-balanced relationship between environmental protection, economic efficiency, customer service, and cost effectiveness is important to the Stadtwerke Augsburg in order to act in the interests of its customers on a long-term basis. Examples are the early promotion of natural gas as an energy source, securing large areas for extracting untreated drinking water, and the planned reconstruction of the Augsburg main train station as a modern traffic hub.

The SEH Solution at a Glance:

Multiport SEH print servers attach the different output devices of the mixed printer pool to the network. Stadtwerke Augsburg operates PS104 print servers with three parallel and one serial port and the precursor model IC104-FASTBOX-TX. In addition, the PS34a print server with a parallel interface and a USB 2.0 high speed port, which can be extended to four with a separate hub, is also utilized. The highly reliable network connections of the printers ensure that all network printers and over 300 applications for printing are available for all users at any time, working very cost-efficiently and requiring almost no maintenance. The robust model PS104 with solid metal casing is very durable and optimized for operation in garages, under work tables, and generally in environments where it might be exposed to shocks and vibrations. SEH print servers can be centrally managed without interfering with other internal processes at Stadtwerke Augsburg.

The Stadtwerke Augsburg (Augsburg municipal utilities, Germany) is a modern municipal utility providing water, energy, and public transport for more than 350,000 people in the Augsburg area. To this purpose, many different departments, service points, garages, and repair stations are coordinated. Naturally a lot of material is needed in printed form. There is so much output that the print volume has never been exactly measured – a five-digit amount is estimated. A mixed printer pool of about 500 output devices by various vendors, including HP, Kyocera Mita, and Lexmark, is available via the network to print letters, forms, statistics, street maps, prints from measuring instruments and much more. Plotters, e. g. by Canon, are also used to print large maps and floor plans. About 1,000 users print via more than 300 applications. It is essential that everything related to network printing functions smoothly without much time and effort for administration and maintenance.

However, there was one weak point: The print servers in operation were not always reliable. When they failed, printing was not possible and there were many help-desk-calls. In the end the IT user service at Stadtwerke Augsburg had to replace the print servers in question. In addition to the hardware costs for the replacement print servers, all this caused administration and maintenance effort, including costs for trained staff. "We have to provide for the smooth communication between user and printer. So we really had to look for a better solution to connect the printers to the network," says Christine Sibig of IT-Benutzerservice (IT user service) of Stadtwerke Augsburg. She adds: "Simple installation, high reliability and very high quality of the print servers were of utmost importance to us."

ROBUST PRINT SERVERS FOR VARIOUS ENVIRONMENTS

With "very high quality" Sibig means that all network components, including print servers, have to be able to stand rough handling. Design is not significant but stability and robustness are. Together with her team Christine Sibig searched the Internet for a suitable solution and found the IC104-FASTBOX-TX multiport print server by the German network printing specialist SEH. This device is equipped with three ports for

parallel printers and one serial port. But most of all, it comes with a protective metal casing which makes it the perfect solution for heavy duty environments, being able to endure shock and vibration. At Stadtwerke Augsburg, for instance, SEH print servers are not only operated in offices but also in repair stations and garages for tram maintenance and vehicle inspection. Sibig contacted SEH directly and very soon test samples were installed. It took only three weeks to decide that this print server was the new solution for the network printers at Stadtwerke Augsburg. The local dealer Sahl processed the first order early in 2006, which was soon followed by others. In November 2006 SEH launched the follow-up model PS104 which comes with enhanced features and better security. It is also already in use at Stadtwerke Augsburg.

VERSATILE AND ALWAYS READY FOR SERVICE

Stadtwerke Augsburg also operates plotters which are used by its own planning and drawing offices and by external service providers such as architects and construction engineers. They need city maps with streets, canals as well as water, energy, and gas mains, which are sometimes located via GPS and Google Earth. Printers and print servers have to support all printing applications seamlessly because the users must be able to check the status of their print job at any time. For these users, delays due to printer failure cause time pressure and extra costs. The reliability of SEH print servers is held in high regard by these users as well as the administrators of the IT user service of Stadtwerke Augsburg.

SIMPLE STANDARD MANAGEMENT OF MIXED PRINTER POOL

Included Installation Wizards enable users to quickly and easily install SEH print servers with just a few mouse clicks. In networks without DHCP/DNS server the integrated DHCP support allows the automatic assignment of an IP address to the print server. The administrator does not need to assign it manually. The integrated web servers also simplify configuration and management: Via a standard browser users can remotely configure and manage all SEH print servers, independent of location and operating system. Configuration via email is possible with the POP3 function, which can also be used to send emails and attachments directly to the connected printer for printing. The history and accounting functions deliver detailed information regarding sent, cancelled, and completed print jobs (e.g. sender, time of sending, volume, duration, page count at the printer etc.), so a survey of the output volume and cost is possible. The SEH InterCon-Net Tool, developed by SEH, is perfectly suited to manage the mixed printer pool at Stadtwerke Augsburg: Administrators can manage whole groups of print servers and printers uniformly and transparently. This saves a lot of time, e.g. in case of updates or changes in the configuration for a particular group.

SEH Print Servers at the Stadtwerke Augsburg

IT Environment at Stadtwerke Augsburg

- *Network: Fast Ethernet, non-homogeneous sub-nets*
- *PC work stations: circa 1,000 PC work stations*
- *Print server: Windows Server 2003*
- *Network printers (number/model): mixed printer park with about 500 different output devices by HP, Kyocera Mita, Lexmark, and HP plotters*
- *Server environment: Windows 2003 Server*
- *Operating system: Microsoft Windows XP*
- *Protocol: TCP/IP*

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

"We have reduced problems with network printing considerably," a pleased Sibig states. This network printing solution for the printer pool of the Stadtwerke Augsburg provides the required high availability, robustness, and easy management with maximum efficiency. This is why the first order of SEH print servers has been followed by several more – and this will continue for a while. "Currently we are testing several USB printer models," Sibig reports. She has just finished successfully testing the SEH print server PS34a. This model, too, is a multiport print server. It features a fast USB 2.0 high speed interface which can be extended to four with a separate USB hub. In addition, there is a parallel port, as parallel printers will continue to be operated at Stadtwerke Augsburg – with SEH print servers.

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