SYNTERGY

Customer Solution Case Study

STX Europe
Getting On Board with Replication

What is the best way to navigate a corporate commitment to the project, the team and global development? STX Europe is charting new waters as it discovers how server-to-server replication technology can help its project team members do their jobs quicker, easier and with greater worldwide collaboration. The Replicator for SharePoint™ solution supports community building and project collaboration between various groups within the company, such as IT, Finance and Engineering.

The Need

Like many companies trying to balance the delicate business of growth and global expansion, STX Europe gave careful consideration as to how best to build out its IT infrastructure to its 20,000 employees across Europe, Brazil and Vietnam. This would be no small feat with 18 shipyards, each one specializing in a different type of ship, from large cruise liners, merchant vessels for commercial transport, advanced support and construction vessels for the Oil Industry, navy and fishing vessels, to those that lay fiber optic cables.

According, Noralf Gamlem, Head of ICT in the Offshore & Specialized Vessels business area of STX Europe, "STX Europe considers itself a networking company and, as such, we needed to ensure a certain level of operational autonomy across our globally distributed shipyards."

"That being said, we don't like to recreate the wheel when it comes to building plans and development, so it was also very important that our IT infrastructure lend itself to providing every employee with access to common, shared resources through our SharePoint solution," says Mr. Gamlem. "The challenge was ensuring that employees wouldn't get frustrated when accessing key documents for shipbuilding efforts. Delays in accessing information or slow downloads are inefficient and tend to discourage employees."

Vital Statistics

Products:
Replicator for SharePoint™

Customer:
STX Europe

Industry:
AEC

Website:
www.stxeurope.com

Applications:
1. Globally distributed SharePoint environments
2. Extranet

Benefits:
- Scalability
- Bi-directional replication across firewall
- Real-time replication
- Local access to documents
- Employee satisfaction
- RDC (Remote Differential Compression) Replication – 90% or more savings in bandwidth
- Community building and project collaboration
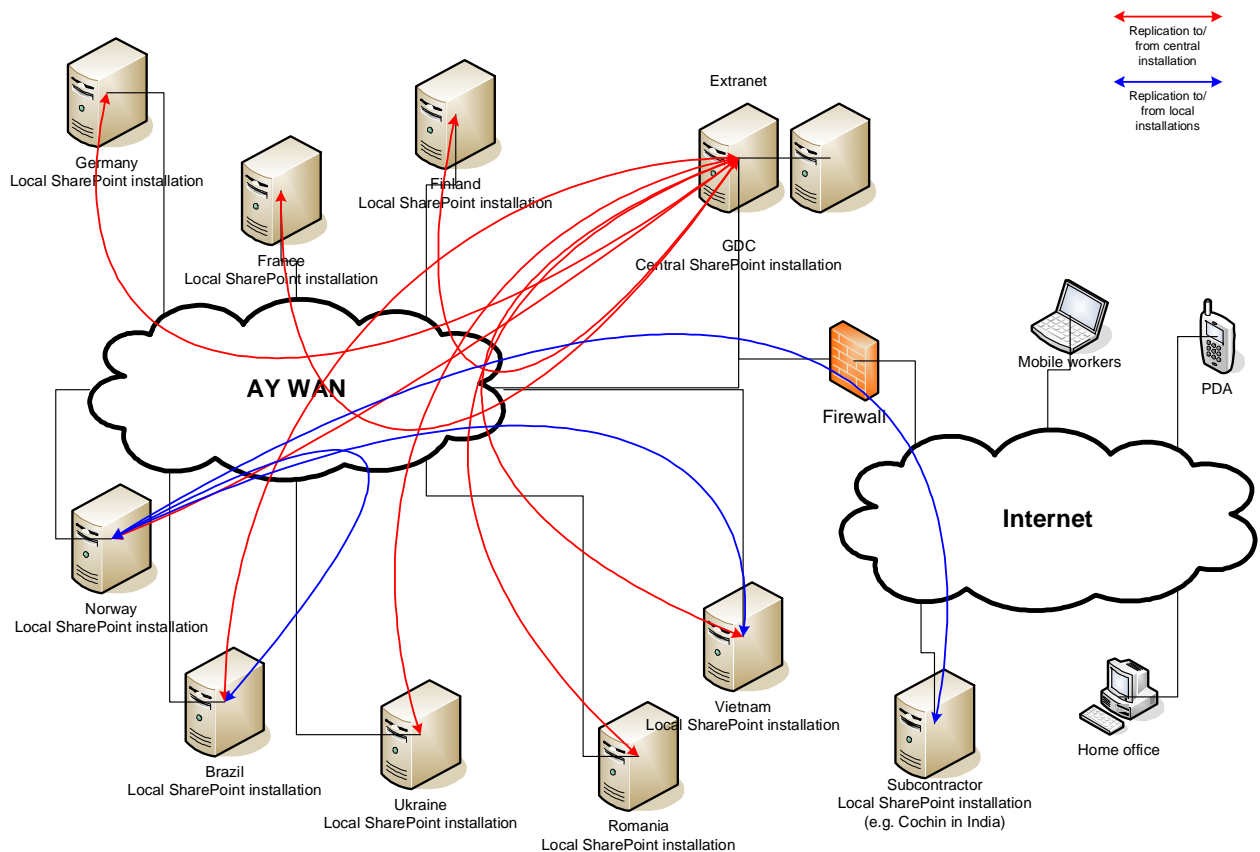
The Solution

It was this desire to motivate and encourage employee satisfaction that led STX Europe (then Aker Yards) to Syntergy's Replicator. "Replicator was exactly what we were looking for: A proven solution that fully integrated into the SharePoint environment," says Mr. Gamlem. With Replicator providing real-time access to critical shipbuilding documents, remote offices can access key data when and where they need it and yet still maintain quick access to the data where high latency and low bandwidth prevent a central installation.

Using Replicator to establish a sophisticated Wide Area SharePoint Environment (WASPE), STX Europe plans to maintain a series of bi-directional replication instances from its main SharePoint installation in Norway (see graphic) out to various local SharePoint installations throughout Europe. STX Europe has already set up 3 bi-directional replication instances from its local SharePoint server in Norway out to its shipyards in Vietnam, Romania and Brazil. By replicating the look and feel components of the SharePoint site, each of these replicated instances is virtually identical in appearance and consistent in branding.

stx Europe

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**Noralf Gamlem,
Head of ICT, Offshore &
Specialized Vessels,
STX Europe**

Replication to/ from central installation

Replication to/ from local installations

Extranet

Germany
Local SharePoint installation

France
Local SharePoint installation

Finland
Local SharePoint installation

GDC
Central SharePoint installation

Mobile workers

PDA

AY WAN

Firewall

Internet

Norway
Local SharePoint installation

Vietnam
Local SharePoint installation

Home office

Brazil
Local SharePoint installation

Ukraine
Local SharePoint installation

Romania
Local SharePoint installation

Subcontractor
Local SharePoint installation
(e.g. Cochin in India)

STX Europe also had plans to better support the remote and mobile workers of its offshore group using Replicator. Mr. Gamlem says, "Replicator is a very flexible and scalable product. We were able to create an extranet setup to better support our offshore shipbuilding efforts for the Oil industry."

Now STX Europe has enabled its mobile workers to securely upload and download large CAD files via their laptops while travelling or from home offices.

The Benefits

Bi-directional asynchronous replication enables STX Europe to address the daily challenges of global information sharing by providing real-time, immediate replication of all content based on SharePoint events, like uploads, document edits, new tasks, etc.

The Architecture, Engineering and Construction (AEC) industry is fraught with revisions and version changes. Replicator takes advantage of Microsoft's Remote Differential Compression (RDC) algorithms to support bit level differencing to further reduce the demands on the network for challenged environments. For example, an AutoCAD drawing with a line added to the file shows a 90% savings in bandwidth, while a simple vector added on an AutoCAD drawing performs at a 98% savings in bandwidth.

"We frequently need to upload and download large CAD files," says Mr. Gamlem. "Replicator helps to significantly speed up access to the files our employees need to reduce the risks of not working with the most current revisions."

In addition to the Engineering department, STX Europe's IT and Finance departments are also secure in the knowledge that the documents they work on everyday are current and that everyone is 'working from the same page'. Synchronized versions and metadata are now leading the way toward greater worldwide project collaboration at STX Europe.

About STX Europe

STX Europe (STXEUR) is an international shipbuilding group which aims to be the leading builder of cruise and offshore vessels. Formerly known as Aker Yards ASA, the group changed its name to STX Europe in November 2008. It was as Aker Yards when the global shipbuilder first implemented Syntergy's Replicator to support its employees' worldwide construction efforts. Recognized for developing state-of-the-art concepts, technology, processes and products for customers around the world, this was the time for the group to apply its development innovation to its own internal processes.