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— Darren Heelan, Business Analyst, WH Smith Travel

WH Smith secures it with Neverfail Group

WH Smith Travel, a division of WH Smith, faced a significant challenge as they sought to move their warehouse stock picking system from one based on manual paper based processes to an automated one. This new business critical system needed to be protected against any downtime, as a non-functioning system would mean orders not being fulfilled and stores not being able to stock the goods they had requested.

Darren Heelan, Business Analyst for WH Smith Travel, explains, “The change from paper picking to voice picking has simplified the distribution process significantly. Before the upgrade reams and reams of paper orders would be distributed to ‘pickers’ or warehouse employees, who would go out and pick stock based on the list provided. Now voice picking involves a small unit worn around a belt, which is attached to a microphone and a headset, leaving their hands free for more efficient working. The voice system then tells them where to go and what to pick, and they can send back information via the system.”

VoiteQ, a Neverfail partner, was responsible for the implementation of the new system (Talkman®) and the associated protection of two SQL servers. The voice picking distribution system, which takes the place of the retailer’s legacy paper based method, requires the servers to be running at all times for the system to work.

Any unplanned downtime would disrupt WH Smith’s distribution system, prevent stock from getting to its destination on time, and have an immediate negative impact on sales.

The Neverfail and VoiteQ solution for SQL Server monitors the whole application stack, including data, the system, the network adapters and the application itself, thereby preventing any downtime regardless of the cause of failure.

Heelan concludes, “Our reliance on this distribution system is core to the business. Since implementing Neverfail for the Voice Server, we have had one incident where one of our servers went down. However, the secondary, back up server kicked in immediately, without any issues and with no effect on the warehouse. Had we not had Neverfail, the consequences could have been significant. . This is exactly what we wanted to see, a seamless transition between the primary and backup servers, which is why we bought Neverfail.”

ABOUT NEVERFAIL FOR SQL SERVER

Neverfail for SQL Server is the most comprehensive high availability, low cost software solution for Microsoft SQL Server. Designed to keep your users connected to their critical data at all times, regardless of the cause of failure, Neverfail for SQL Server proactively monitors the health of your physical server hardware, network infrastructure, operating system, and Microsoft SQL Server application.

If any problem occurs, Neverfail can take a variety of preemptive, corrective actions to resolve the issue without resorting to a full system fail-over. In extreme cases where the issue can not be resolved, a graceful switch-over to your secondary server can occur, automatically, ensuring continuous database availability.

ABOUT NEVERFAIL

The Neverfail Group (Neverfail) is a leading global software company providing affordable, “cluster-class,” high application availability and disaster recovery software solutions for the Microsoft® technology platform.

Neverfail’s software solutions enable users to remain continuously connected to a live software application, irrespective of hardware, software, operating system, or network failures.

ABOUT VOITEQ

VoiteQ is a software house based in the North West of England specializing in voice recognition (VR) applications.

VoiteQ specialize in advanced data capture solutions for Warehousing and Distribution and are focused on utilizing the latest voice recognition technology. They supply and maintain the hardware required for the integration of VR to VARs in the UK and Europe. <http://www.voiteq.com>