

Splunk at Corporate Express

From Improved IT Efficiency to Actionable Business Intelligence



“My colleagues are amazed when I pull up an instance of Splunk and show logs, performance data, and application data, in one location, sortable by time.”

Shaun Butler
Sr. Technology Specialist,
Infrastructure, Corporate
Express Australia

OVERVIEW

INDUSTRY

- Retail and online office products/ services

SPLUNK USE CASES

- IT Operations – Single systems log and management repository for all IT teams
- Capacity Planning – Comprehensive capacity management dashboards
- Business Intelligence – Analyze and present data from business applications

BUSINESS IMPACT

- Enabled measurement of infrastructure capacity for a mission-critical SAP rollout
- Empowered IT operations team with real-time visibility across entire IT infrastructure
- Supported corporate initiative to consolidate multiple reporting tools
- Provided new monitoring visibility to support their SAP deployment

DATA SOURCES

- Infrastructure logs: Router, firewall, IPS, load balancer
- Server logs: VMware, Windows, Linux, AIX
- Management logs: Nagios, IBM Director and Altiris
- Application logs: ERP, Web, e-commerce and email
- Storage: SAN capacity, backup data

The Business

Corporate Express is one of the leading single-source suppliers of business products and services in Australia and New Zealand. With over 40 locations and over 50 years experience in the region, Corporate Express is a reliable one-stop-shop for business supply needs. Corporate Express offers more than just office supplies, with products and services including: office products, IT solutions, print management, promotional marketing, canteen & catering, corporate cellars, business furniture, facility supplies and educational supplies.

Challenges

With more than 40 sites around Australia and New Zealand and corporate datacenters hosting a myriad of systems, technologies and applications, Corporate Express faced an undesirable scenario where they had a siloed approach to managing and troubleshooting their IT infrastructure. Server technology specialists couldn't access network and security logs and vice versa. Multiple IT personnel were required to solve a single problem and without a single search repository, IT teams were constantly using manual processes and reinventing the wheel to pinpoint and resolve issues.

Enter Splunk

Corporate Express uses Splunk Enterprise for troubleshooting, capacity planning, security, customer service and, increasingly, for actionable business intelligence.

Operations

The IT operations team uses Splunk to provide a single search repository for systems logs, management logs and application logs. This provides advanced visibility across the entire infrastructure for all the different IT teams, including systems, networking, security, applications and development. This saves time that was previously spent communicating and coordinating between different personnel. Further efficiencies have been gained by automating common investigation processes with saved searches and creating dashboards to find issues, understand dependencies and spot trends and patterns far faster and much easier.

Capacity Planning

Corporate Express uses Splunk to aggregate data from multiple disparate systems to create comprehensive capacity management dashboards. Instrumentation of near real-time transaction analysis developed for a SAP rollout in New Zealand, for example, is being used to build usage models that will more accurately determine infrastructure capacity requirements for the current Australian SAP implementation.

Having access to data such as this with Splunk is helping Corporate Express minimize the risk of inappropriate infrastructure provisioning common in large ERP projects.

Business Intelligence

In addition to understanding online user behavior, Corporate Express is currently investigating additional opportunities to leverage Splunk's business intelligence capabilities for core business applications to support internal strategy and decision making.

Breakthroughs

Pro-activity

Since deploying Splunk the infrastructure team has definitely seen the pressure come off. "Splunk has helped us facilitate the journey from a firefighting IT team to a more pro-active one. It really allows us to leverage the data we have at our fingertips. Now we have the ability to do more and find things before they happen and better plan for the future," said Shaun Butler, Senior Technology Specialist, Corporate Express Australia.

Universal Access

Splunk's openness and ability to integrate with Corporate Express's existing systems and tools and easily create new dashboards has seen an explosion in Splunking. No longer the exclusive domain of the infrastructure team, Splunk is now in daily use by IT support, customer service and systems development teams.

Dashboards

The ability to easily capture search logic and present it graphically, has allowed Corporate Express to standardize on Splunk as its IT dashboarding environment.

"The ability to graphically represent thousands of lines of logs in a single graph is truly powerful," said Butler, adding, "Splunk has allowed the organization to identify trends that simply weren't visible in the past."

Return on Investment

The ability to Splunk SAP, for example, provided Corporate Express with new visibility and monitoring capabilities. This has proved critical for performance tuning and capacity planning of their SAP deployment.

Free Download

[Download Splunk](#) for free. You'll get a Splunk Enterprise license for 60 days and you can index up to 500 megabytes of data per day. After 60 days, or anytime before then, you can convert to a perpetual Free license or purchase an Enterprise license by contacting sales@splunk.com.