

Quality. Reliability. Innovation.

Global expansion and rising sales were pushing John Deere's manufacturing resources to their limits. As a result, fast, flexible production planning and maximum capacity utilization were increasingly important – and these are virtually impossible without efficient electronic production control systems. To monitor availability of production-control systems, John Deere opted for theGuard! NetworkManager from REALTECH. This powerful software provides comprehensive, round-the-clock monitoring of network availability, ensuring smooth running of mission-critical processes – freeing up John Deere's IT team to concentrate on their core tasks and strategic projects.

: success story

John Deere Mannheim



JOHN DEERE

Wolfgang Reichelt
Computer Services Supervisor
John Deere, Mannheim plant, Germany

“We ordered and installed the solution in next to no time – and began to see the benefits right away. Deploying theGuard! NetworkManager paid off from the word go. Managing complex networks takes time – and highly skilled specialists. theGuard! NetworkManager enables optimum management of our heterogeneous systems landscape, reducing downtime to a minimum.”



John Deere products:
Photo courtesy of the manufacturer


REALTECH
software



Fast, flexible production control

In 1837, John Deere developed the polished steel plow – an invention that led to the foundation of Deere & Company. Today, the company has over 51,100 employees worldwide, plants in 14 countries, and sells its products in over 160 countries.

Tractor manufacturing in Mannheim, Germany, began in 1921 with the production of the now legendary Lanz Bulldog HL 12. Since then, some 1.25 million tractors have been built in the city – around one million of them under the direction of the Deere company, which acquired a majority interest in Heinrich Lanz AG in 1956.

For 29 years, the John Deere plant in Mannheim has been Germany's leading manufacturer of agricultural tractors. Well over fifty percent of all tractors made in Germany are built in Mannheim.

Mannheim is also the location of John Deere's European headquarters. The company has further sites in Zweibrücken, Bruchsal, and Stadtlohn. Global expansion and rising sales figures called for more flexible, scalable manufacturing. Against this background, John Deere needed to improve the reliability and efficiency of production planning and execution. To meet this challenge, the Mannheim plant decided to deploy PC-based software for production control. Following successful implementation, similar projects were initiated for the Bruchsal and Zweibrücken plants.

Seamless, end-to-end network monitoring

To provide seamless, round-the-clock monitoring of the production-control systems

and to enable prompt problem resolution, John Deere opted to introduce state-of-the-art network management software.

"We wanted a solution that could monitor the availability of the network components, provide a graphical display of the network, and deliver logical performance analysis," says Wolfgang Reichelt. "We opted for theGuard! NetworkManager since it was the only product that ideally met all our criteria."

PSMs for multi-vendor networks

As a Windows-based solution, theGuard! NetworkManager was easily integrated into the existing system at John Deere. The modular software can be tailored to the user's specific requirements. Core functionality includes monitoring of network load and of system and network services, performance analysis, and a graphical display of logical network structure.

theGuard! NetworkManager is unique in being able to identify network components from a wide range of vendors – and display them using a coherent, easy-to-understand graphic. This is thanks to over 250 product-specific modules (PSMs), which have been developed in-house by REALTECH – and new PSMs continue to be added. The TopologyManager provides a graphical overview of the entire network structure.

Today, theGuard! NetworkManager monitors around 2200 nodes and 50 servers at John Deere. A second license for the advanced version of NetworkManager provides a reliable backup system should the main system fail. To minimize administrative overhead, the system is also operated via further second licenses at Zweibrücken and Bruchsal, in addition to Mannheim. The concept has since been extended to John Deere sites in France and Spain.

Far lower risk of downtime

"We have significantly reduced the number of routine monitoring tasks performed by our administrators and operators. Whenever a problem appears likely, or actually occurs, we are alerted via mobile communication devices, allowing us to take prompt action. We now have more time for our core tasks," says Wolfgang Reichelt, describing the changes since John Deere introduced theGuard! NetworkManager. "Deploying NetworkManager was essentially a learning process for us. The graphical display and the detailed information delivered by the software greatly increased our understanding of the network."

As a result, the IT department can now focus on fine-tuning its network structure and on optimizing hardware and software resources.

Customer-driven and interactive

John Deere was impressed by REALTECH's customer-driven approach. When it came to implementing company-specific requirements within the software, REALTECH was quick and flexible.

"We were one of the first customers for theGuard! NetworkManager and have now been using the software for almost 10 years. We are very satisfied with the solution – particularly thanks to the close collaboration with REALTECH's product developers," says Wolfgang Reichelt, summing up the long-standing partnership. "And we are looking forward to collaborating with REALTECH on the global roll-out of SAP R/3. We expect to experience the same levels of success and commitment."