



PRTG Network Monitor keeps the ball rolling at Fulham FC

Founded in 1879, Fulham Football Club is the oldest London football team to have played in the Premier League. As a club that welcomes in the region of 25,000 people to its stadium, Craven Cottage, for home games, a fully functioning IT network that adequately supports all facets of the business is match-critical, from the technology required to put on major sporting events to everyday administration.

However, there is more to Fulham FC than simply putting on a football match every other Saturday. With an IT network that is distributed across several sites, and central to the activities of more than 250 members of staff on a day to day basis, Head of IT Alex Malinov has a sizeable job on his hands. As he puts it, “In spite of having live football at its heart, Fulham FC is a 365-day-a-year organisation.

“Even if there isn’t a game going on, the players are training, people here are gearing up for the next big match, and often our event spaces are being hired out for corporate functions. Being able to ensure that the IT network is able to support those activities is hugely important.”

Super substitute

As a large-scale multi-site organisation, Fulham FC’s IT infrastructure is complex. It consists of 3 sites, and 2 data-centres running VMWare, EMC storage, Juniper switches and Veeam for backup and offsite replication. This is underpinned by a fairly sophisticated VPLS solution from Exponential-E.

The decision to implement a monitoring solution to overlook the network was a straight-forward one for Alex, who needs no reminder of how crucial it is to business performance. “There is a definite need to be aware of what’s happening on the network, to be able to react to issues straight away and, increasingly, prevent the issues from happening in the first place. An effective monitoring solution plays a key role in all of this”, he said.

When asked why he chose Paessler’s PRTG Network Monitor, Alex cites the software’s practicality and cost-effectiveness. “We used OpManager for a couple of years, and also evaluated Solarwinds and Nimsoft, but I wanted to see if there was anything better on the market”, said Alex. When it was recommended to him by a colleague, he did some online research, and was impressed by PRTG’s ease of use, coverage and cost. “In terms of price-performance ratio, it does everything we need it to”, he said. “It’s also very simple to use on a day to day basis.”

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Alex Malinov, Head of IT





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ABOUT PAESSLER AG

Paessler AG's award winning PRTG Network Monitor is a powerful, affordable and easy-to-use Unified Monitoring solution. It is a highly flexible and generic software for monitoring IT infrastructure, already in use at enterprises and organizations of all sizes and industries. Over 150,000 IT administrators in more than 170 countries rely on PRTG and gain peace of mind, confidence and convenience. Founded in 1997 and based in Nuremberg, Germany, Paessler AG remains a privately held company that is recognized as both a member of the Cisco Solution Partner Program and a VMware Technology Alliance Partner.

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Providing the assist

Aside from keeping an eye on the infrastructure, Alex uses PRTG to collect and monitor a whole range of additional information. This has come in particularly handy when there's a game being played. When asked what sensor types he uses, he said, "SFlow provides visibility of bandwidth usage, which is very important on match days for instance. This is impossible to replicate outside of when it is actually happening, so it helps us to plan for it. We also use the VMWare sensors, plus we ping our stadium turnstiles."

Alex also commented on the usability of PRTG, and employs both the web interface and iPhone app for keeping tabs on the network. "The iPhone app is extremely useful when I'm on the move", said Alex. "It allows me to prioritise any alerts that come through outside of office hours quickly and easily."

The winning formula

Ultimately, the ability to gain visibility into the Fulham FC infrastructure, and prevent issues from happening before they arise has made PRTG an indispensable tool for Alex and his team.

The ability to customise the product has also allowed him to adapt it around how the IT team operates, by setting up alerts to only send emails for serious outages, otherwise they rely on the sensors changing colour. Alex has also set up a large screen in the office showing Fulham FC's entire network topography, and all of the sensors that are installed, so that if there is a problem it automatically flashes up.

Alex recognises the importance of the role that PRTG plays for Fulham FC, whether that it is putting on a top quality English Football League match or keeping the lights on at the training ground. As Alex says, "It's ultimately my responsibility as the Head of IT to ensure that the network runs smoothly, and so the uptime and availability delivered by PRTG is absolutely critical to how myself and my team do our jobs."

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