CUSTOMER STORY

RTLZWEI

To navigate their digital transformation, RTLZWEI has joined forces with Icinga partner Würth-Phoenix, leveraging their NetEye Unified Monitoring solution, which is built on Icinga.

The television industry has undergone a profound transformation with the rise of digitalization, leading to market fragmentation and heightened competition. Traditional broadcasters, once dominant with linear TV content, now face new rivals like Netflix and other Video-on-Demand (VOD) platforms. In response, many TV stations, including RTLZWEI, have adapted by delivering content via new channels, such as smartphones and tablets, to meet the growing demand for on-the-go, time-shifted viewing.

RTLZWEI is a private German-language television channel that became known primarily for its reality shows and daily soaps. The channel is an offshoot of the RTL Group, which operates television channels, radio stations, streaming services, content production, and various digital offerings, along with marketing activities. The RTL Group had an estimated revenue of 6.3 billion euros in 2024. RTLZWEI is also a subsidiary of Bertelsmann SE & Co. KGaA, the second-largest media group in Europe.

The Challenge

> Icinga means openness, accessibility, and supportive community behind the solution!
>
> Patrick Zambelli
> Team Lead Technical Consulting
> Würth-Phoenix

Michail Schabatin, an IT specialist at Ready Computer on behalf of RTLZWEI, oversees the station's monitoring needs, working closely with Patrick Zambelli, a NetEye consultant at Würth-Phoenix. RTLZWEI employs around 250 staff, many of whom use Windows workstations with high-performance hardware to accommodate video editing needs. Given the station's intensive network traffic, fiber optic connections were installed at each workstation long ago.

With a significant portion of employees working from home after the pandemic, RTLZWEI needed to monitor both on-site and remote devices, ensuring smooth data flows between home offices and the central network.

RTLZWEI operates three data centers at its Grünwald headquarters, utilizing a combination of bare-metal servers for large storage requirements and gradually moving toward cloud infrastructure. One of the main challenges they face is the vast amount of data generated by working with video content. A one-hour RAW video file can be as large as 300–400 GB, and RTLZWEI also needs to meet strict data retention requirements, which increases the need for massive storage capacities.

As video formats and technologies evolve, the volume of data grows exponentially. RTLZWEI required a monitoring tool that could not only keep pace with these changes but also be flexible and scalable to manage the future growth of data and infrastructure.

The Solution

To monitor its entire infrastructure, RTLZWEI chose Würth-Phoenix's NetEye. As Würth-Phoenix strategically decided to build NetEye 4 on Icinga 2, this paved the way for RTLZWEI's migration. The migration required concepts for mapping relevant monitoring objects and introducing new paradigms like dynamic object mappings via apply rules.

Beyond a smooth migration, RTLZWEI also gained a significant improvement: agentless monitoring, which was essential for their operations. The broadcasting station also implemented synthetic monitoring using Alyvix to test their video editing applications. Alyvix enables RTLZWEI to interact with application GUIs and compare expected outcomes with real-time states. It helps RTLZWEI ensure that business-critical workflows run smoothly by continuously measuring user experiences.

As part of their ongoing transformation, RTLZWEI has been migrating many services to a public cloud (Azure) while simultaneously transitioning to Kubernetes. This shift includes rewriting their software to enhance container compatibility, which also impacts their monitoring strategy. They are developing new ways to access data that were previously difficult to retrieve, but they still want to view everything within a single interface.

Although tools like Prometheus provide a vast array of data, filtering out the most relevant information remains a challenge for users. To address this, RTL2 relies on Tornado, a WP's open-source event processing engine published for community purposes. Tornado receives events from Prometheus' Alert manager, processes them, and automatically sends them to Icinga for further action. With this approach, RTLZWEI ensures effective infrastructure monitoring while scaling to meet growing demands.

Michail Schabatin highlights the value of Icinga in their operations: "I am glad that with Icinga, we have a tool that allows all participating admins to create the ideal custom environment. Some use it to generate reports when a temperature sensor sends an alert, while others make our client network visible. From ensuring operations through performance measurement and process optimization to now integrating our cloud requirements, Icinga is a reliable companion."

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Michail Schabatin
IT-Specialist
Ready Computer

Success

> Keep up the great work!
>
> Michail Schabatin
> IT Specialist
> Ready Computer

By migrating to Icinga, RTLZWEI has experienced numerous "substantial improvements" as Michail states contently. The Icinga interface is more organized and user-friendly, allowing RTLZWEI's team to easily customize the dashboard to fit their needs. Michail highlights Icinga's API and Icinga Director as his favorite features.

The strong cooperation between RTLZWEI and Würth-Phoenix has been highly successful. Michail values his productive working relationship with Patrick from Würth-Phoenix, while Patrick praises the flexibility of the Icinga solution to adopt and scale the architecture to the needs of a customer's project. He appreciates that the Icinga web framework allows custom extension to simplify interaction with the powerful Icinga API and DSL language. Apart this he appreciates the availability of a partner support channel to find solutions as well the community activities with the various events where to meet and network.

Patrick sums it up: "Icinga means openness and flexibility, allowing me to develop the solution for my project's needs!"

Modern IT architectures are becoming increasingly complex, with a growing demand to integrate new dimensions beyond traditional infrastructure monitoring.

At RTLZWEI, for instance, OpenShift measurements were mapped from Prometheus alerts. In other projects, the need arises to incorporate alerts from other monitoring sources, such as cloud providers or findings from logs and metrics. The extensible framework of Icinga empowers IT teams by providing the necessary information tailored to their needs.

Looking ahead, RTLZWEI is focused on further transitioning its monitoring setup towards cloud and Kubernetes solutions. However, Michail notes that RTLZWEI isn't aiming for a full cloud transformation. Additionally, they are working on external service monitoring and ensuring optimal performance for employees who continue to work from home post-pandemic. With Icinga, RTLZWEI is confident in monitoring their high-volume data workflows and distributed work environments.

To share their successful journey with the wider Icinga community, RTLZWEI presented their story at the Icinga Summit 2024.

The presentation showcased the key improvements and strategies they implemented in their digital transformation, reinforcing the impact of Icinga on their infrastructure management.

Outcomes

- [x] Successful implementation of NetEye4 and Icinga 2 to monitor growing infrastructure and massive data flows
- [x] Smooth transition enabled agentless monitoring and synthetic testing for uninterrupted workflows
- [x] Icinga's user-friendly interface and customizable features streamline RTLZWEI's monitoring processes
- [x] Strong partnership between RTLZWEI, Würth-Phoenix, and Icinga ensures efficient problem-solving and system improvements
- [x] RTLZWEI is prepared to manage cloud services, Kubernetes, and remote work environments confidently with Icinga.

Share your Story

Do you also have excellent experiences with Icinga and would like to share them?
We'd be happy to make your story come out big on our website!

Please get into contact with us at:
info@icinga.com

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About Icinga

Icinga is a comprehensive open source monitoring solution that integrates easily in existing infrastructures and is unbeatable in configuration possibilities, automation and scaling. Monitor private, public, or hybrid clouds. For more information, visit icinga.com

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