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Challenge

- » Improve user experience
- » Expand service delivery area

Solution

- » Riverbed Steelhead appliances

Benefits

- » Higher performance, higher quality services
- » Service area extended beyond existing limits

Aspire.net Legal Services

Riverbed[®] Steelhead[®] Appliances Enable Improved Services to Users while Expanding Market Area

Aspire.net Legal Services, a division of mindSHIFT Technologies (www.mindshift.com), provides managed IT services, primarily to the legal and professional services industries in the eastern United States. The company's comprehensive services include management and support of locally-installed desktop and laptop applications along with hosting of critical servers at co-location facilities in New York and Virginia.

Aspire.net's clients use a wide range of client-server applications including Microsoft Outlook and Office, custom legal applications and popular document management products such as iManage from Interwoven and Hummingbird DM.

Challenge: High Service Levels Even in the Event of Network Failure

The company must deliver consistently high service quality levels to attorneys and paralegal users who require access to their servers 24/7 — even in the event of a network failure. IT and business managers have to be confident that their users will have high-quality application performance no matter what happens.

“With Riverbed’s Steelhead appliances deployed, we found that large PDF documents that used to take almost 30 seconds for a user to open now open in about four seconds.”

Aspire.net faced several challenges, including the need to provide a consistent, high quality user application experience — particularly for operations involving large files. Service quality also must not be impacted in the event of network failure.

When a primary network link (typically 1-3 Mbps) went down, it would failover to a fractional T1 or DSL (typically 256 to

512 kbps). Since the local telecom provider might take a day or more to find and fix the problem, the client faced reduced application performance in the interim. In addition, Aspire.net wanted to be able to extend their reach beyond their current geographic parameters.

Solution: Steelhead Appliances

After Aspire.net installed Steelhead appliances, the results were dramatic. According to Sam Collier, one of the principals of Aspire's parent company, Union Square Technology Group, “We have client sites that have experienced failovers from three Mbps bandwidth to a 500 kbps backup link. With the Steelhead appliances deployed, users didn't notice any performance degradation.”



“We’ve cut our WAN traffic to client sites by half, and in some case more.”

Windows file transfers perform poorly as latency climbs near 80-100 ms, Aspire.net’s client base was limited to law firms with offices within several hundred miles of New York and Virginia.

With Steelhead appliances deployed, Aspire.net is able to deliver high-quality service even to firms with offices thousands of miles away. Users in distant offices now get the same service levels as sites that are closer to the data centers.

Benefits

“With Riverbed’s Steelhead appliances deployed,” said Collier, “we found that large PDF documents that used to take almost 30 seconds for a user to open now open in about four seconds. We also found that we’ve cut our WAN traffic to client sites by about half, and in some cases more.” Equally important, he added, is that, in the event of a network failover, “it’s difficult for the user to tell” that there’s been a problem.

Steelhead appliances also expanded the company’s market area. Because network latency (Round Trip Time, or RTT) is roughly proportional to distance, and because applications like Exchange and

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About Riverbed

Riverbed Technology is the IT infrastructure performance company. The Riverbed family of wide area network (WAN) optimization solutions liberates businesses from common IT constraints by increasing application performance, enabling consolidation, and providing enterprise-wide network and application visibility – all while eliminating the need to increase bandwidth, storage or servers. Thousands of companies with distributed operations use Riverbed to make their IT infrastructure faster, less expensive and more responsive. Additional information about Riverbed (NASDAQ: RVBD) is available at www.riverbed.com



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