

Simmons & Simmons



Clear picture of end-user experience drives transformation of Simmons & Simmons' workplace environment.

Simmons & Simmons is a multinational law firm, headquartered in London with offices worldwide. It opened its first international office over 50 years ago, when Simmons & Simmons was the first law firm from the City of London to open an office in Brussels.

Today, the business has offices in 22 key financial centers across Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

Simmons & Simmons' strategy is to build an international presence using a combination of local lawyers with demonstrable local knowledge and fully integrated teams acting together at a global level.

2,000 end-users across all 22 locations now monitored

In Brief

Challenges

- Establish the means to manage, monitor and improve application performance across desktop estate
- Ensure consistent end-user experience for 2,000 users worldwide

Solution

- Riverbed® Aternity

Benefits

- Establishes single view of digital applications
- Improves issue resolution and bolsters support teams
- Enables business to monitor change management and better inform future IT investment

Challenge: Rethinking the workplace

Simmons & Simmons would like to rethink the typical law firm workplace environment, with fewer private offices and more open plan spaces.

“We want to create a more flexible and welcoming way of working,” says Ross Jeremy, Modern Workplace Team Lead, Simmons & Simmons. “Staff shouldn’t be constrained by a desk, so we are looking at space for ad hoc meetings to improve collaboration.”

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Modern Workplace Team Lead, Simmons & Simmons

The firm’s new Bristol office features break-out areas, more light and an on-site café. The aim, explains Jeremy, is to create an environment where people want to work, where clients want to visit, and where work is more effective.

“We have five different generations of IT working here, and their requirements can be different. We want an environment that allows people to work in the way that is most effective for them,” he says.

From an IT perspective, Simmons & Simmons now favors a cloud-first approach, with the scale and flexibility to suit a growing, multinational operation. “We recognize that one size doesn’t fit all and there are occasions when we’ll have to reflect specific local needs,” says Jeremy. “For that to work, we need everyone on a stable, common platform, and to understand how everything – from device to applications – is working. We want to know about the experience of users on the other side of the world, not just those sitting five meters from the IT team.”

The plan, says Jeremy, was to standardize desktops for all users and upgrade to Microsoft Windows 10. Alongside this, he wanted to be able to centrally monitor the end-user experience: “We monitor the servers, we monitor the network and we now want to monitor the experience of every end-user.”

Solutions: Closing the IT visibility gap

Simmons & Simmons already used Riverbed solutions for its WAN optimization. “We had a good working relationship and it was clear Riverbed understood our business. When we were recommended Aternity, it made sense to explore further,” says Jeremy.

This included conversations with Aternity customers and a Proof of Concept. “We could see first-hand with real data, on real devices in our environment,” Jeremy says. “The positive things we’d heard about Aternity rang true. It very much fitted our needs.”

The solution was put in place, alongside the desktop refresh and Windows 10 upgrade, across all 22 locations, in six months. All 2,000 Simmons & Simmons end-users, from partners to business support, are now monitored.

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Aternity closes the IT monitoring visibility gap with accurate, real-time information about how Simmons & Simmons' end-users actually experience and interact with their applications, devices, and network. It automatically generates a baseline for every application, device and user performance metric collected.

Baselines can automatically be split, by location, subnet or target server so that a granular baseline exists for different groups of users. Users can also set manual thresholds for acceptable performance.

As soon as performance deviates from a baseline or threshold, Aternity detects the problem, generates alerts and opens trouble tickets. Aternity also speeds up resolution by automatically analyzing the business impact and affected groups, and identifying the probable cause.

Benefits: Effective support and better user experience

The impact, says Jeremy, is far reaching. Worldwide support is more effective and more consistent. End-users experience fewer issues with devices and applications and management has solid metrics to inform future investment.

"Aternity gathers the information and presents it in a format that is easy to understand," says Jeremy. "We might have known there was an issue – certainly the most vocal users would let us know, but now we have the data to back it up. Aternity adds metrics to perception."

At an operational level, Aternity enables his team to benchmark performance and alert support whenever, and wherever, there is deviation. Whether it's the number of dropped Skype calls in a given week, or

the performance of Excel at the Amsterdam office, there is a clearer understanding of what good performance looks like, he says, and when it is time to intervene: "We can now be more proactive because we don't have as many fires to put out. With Aternity, we're monitoring the heartbeat of the business; if there is an issue we're often ahead of it."

By extending Aternity to support teams, he continues, he has been able to speed up troubleshooting: "Very often a user knows there is an issue, but can't articulate the problem. Aternity enables the support team to check, say, the last time a device was rebooted, or the type of network connection. It gives us a head start on resolving the problem."

These metrics, he continues, will also help ensure the more effective delivery of future IT projects: "Investment costs money, it may be disruptive. Now that we can determine the end-user experience, we have a better chance of judging the value of a new project to the business."

Aternity's solution provides immediate insight into how application performance affects productivity. It allows Simmons & Simmons to instantaneously assess how long users wait for business-critical applications, by analyzing application usage, time spent running in the foreground, active time, wait time, and crashes.

"With Aternity we can be confident in the work we're doing," Jeremy says. "Visibility into the impact of change is a key benefit. When we're making changes that may affect the end-user, we can test, pilot among a small user group, and be satisfied we haven't degraded the service. Only then will we fully roll-out worldwide."

Creating a community of Aternity users

Today, Aternity monitors desktop users at Simmons & Simmons and Jeremy expects to be monitoring all mobile users in the future:

“Desktops are the core of the business, but we know 50% of users are accessing emails on their mobile device. Mobiles are part of a lawyers’ everyday life. We can deploy applications to mobiles securely, so it makes sense for us to understand how these apps are performing.”

He also wants to broaden the use of Aternity. Rather than just being a solution for those in IT management, he wants to make it available to a wider user group: “We want to create a community of users,” he says. “With Aternity, it’s a lot easier to spot a problem or trends and the more this becomes part of the daily business of support, the better we’ll be.”

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About Riverbed

Riverbed, the leader in AI observability, helps organizations optimize their users’ experiences by leveraging AI automation for the prevention, identification, and resolution of IT issues. With over 20 years of experience in data collection and AI and machine learning, Riverbed’s open and AI-powered observability platform and solutions optimize digital experiences and greatly improve IT efficiency. Riverbed also offers industry-leading Acceleration solutions that provide fast, agile, secure acceleration of any app, over any network, to users anywhere. Together with our thousands of market-leading customers globally – including 95% of the *FORTUNE* 100 – we are empowering next-generation digital experiences. Learn more at riverbed.com.