

IN BRIEF

Industry

- » Finance - Banking

Challenge:

- » Servers located at all 190 branch offices
- » Data integrity being compromised

Solution:

- » 150 Riverbed Steelhead appliances installed, as well as the Central Management Console (CMC)

Benefits:

- » Removed 150 servers from local branches
- » 87% reduction in bandwidth utilization
- » 90% reduction in CIFS traffic
- » Data backup performed centrally



Raiffeisen Bank

Raiffeisen Bank removes 150 servers from 150 branch offices with Riverbed[®] Steelhead[®] appliances

Background

The Federation of Raiffeisen Cooperatives (www.raiffeisen.it) is a group of cooperative entities based in Italy, incorporating banking, agriculture, energy and social services. The banking and insurance services are managed by Raiffeisen Banks with a total of 190 offices throughout the Alto Adige province in Northern Italy, employing 1,750 people and with a turnover of € 9.15bn.

Challenge: Consolidate IT from 190 branch offices to 40 local head offices and a centralized data center

Raiffeisen Bank had previously pursued a strategy to install servers in each branch location. However, with 190 offices throughout the Northern Italian region, this strategy had become unmanageable. Data between sites was not always consistent and on occasion was not updated. Backups were performed locally, resulting in high costs; maintaining the servers was also time consuming and costly. For mobile employees the problem was even more widespread, with users losing valuable time trying to download emails and files.

“We looked at Cisco, but Riverbed was way ahead of the competition and the clear leader”

To manage this dispersed architecture, Raiffeisen has outsourced their base IT services to Raising Unified Network S.p.A. “The main challenge was to consolidate data from 190 offices to just 40 local head offices and a centralized data center. This would

provide a more robust architecture, and would allow users to have constant and up-to-date access to files,” explained Dr Peter Werth, director of RUN. “However we wanted to find a solution that would not involve an increase in bandwidth costs.”

The architecture is mainly hub and spoke and is based on HDSL, wireless, fiber or leased lines depending on availability, using Cisco routers and switches. The bank runs a number of proprietary applications alongside Microsoft Windows 2003, Microsoft XP, and Lotus Notes.

Solution: Riverbed Steelhead appliances ahead of the competition

RUN first heard about wide area network (WAN) optimization solutions through a UK distributor and investigated the various options available.

Werth recalled, “We first heard about Riverbed two years ago. We also looked at Cisco, but Riverbed was way ahead of the competition and the clear leader.” He continued, “The Riverbed Steelhead appliances were just easier to implement and deploy. They’re more transparent and technologically advanced. We had no problem in choosing Riverbed as the solution for Raiffeisen.”

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Werth continued, “After some fine tuning the appliances worked very well in our environment. We also had very little work to do in order to integrate the Steelhead appliances with our Cisco routing infrastructure. The Steelhead appliances are very transparent, easy to implement and have required no ongoing management or maintenance to date.”

Benefits: 150 servers removed from branch offices

Raiffeisen has now installed 150 Steelhead appliances in 150 offices, and removed 150 local servers. Data is now stored at head office layer and data integrity can now be guaranteed.

“The results have been great. Bandwidth utilization has been reduced by over 87%, CIFS traffic has been reduced by 90% and HTTP traffic reduced by over 75%” noted Werth.

Raiffeisen also installed the Central Management Console (CMC). “Thanks to the Riverbed CMC we can now have a real-time view of our data and global visibility of Raiffeisen operations” explained Werth.

Steelhead appliances have also simplified the task of performing software upgrades, now that servers are in one location. In addition, Raiffeisen can now start a future project plan to back up data over the WAN, which saves considerable time and resources. “In the past we had a dedicated person who would spend half an hour every day controlling data backups across the branch offices,” recalled Werth. “Thanks to the Steelhead appliances we’ve been able to remove this function and re-allocate the staff to other projects.”

Looking Ahead:

Raiffeisen plans to install an additional 40 appliances to remove servers from every branch office. They are also currently testing Steelhead Mobile as they want to provide this functionality to their consultants. Steelhead Mobile is a software only version of the technology that sits on the laptops of mobile workers, providing the same improved application performance to workers on the move.

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



2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009



SUMMARY

Raiffeisen Bank had pursued an IT strategy to install servers at each branch location. With approximately 190 locations, this strategy made data integrity difficult to ensure and access to applications unreliable. To enable a centralized IT infrastructure, Raiffeisen installed 150 Steelhead appliances in 150 offices. Raiffeisen Bank has removed 150 servers from the branch offices, experienced an 87% reduction in bandwidth utilization, and now has a robust and secure infrastructure.

Riverbed Technology
199 Fremont Street
San Francisco, CA 94105
Tel: +1 415 247 8800
Fax: +1 415 247 8801
www.riverbed.com

Riverbed Technology Ltd.
Farley Hall, London Road
Binfield
Bracknell
Berks RG42 4EU
Tel: +44 (0) 1344 401900

Riverbed Technology Pte. Ltd.
391A Orchard Road #22-06/10
Ngee Ann City Tower A
Singapore 238873
Tel: +65 6508-7400

Riverbed Technology K.K.
Shiba-Koen Plaza Building 9F
3-6-9, Shiba, Minato-ku
Tokyo, Japan 105-0014
Tel: +81 3 5419 1990

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