

IN BRIEF

Industry

- » Retail

Challenges

- » Accelerate application performance especially SAP for a globally distributed workforce
- » Improve employee collaboration
- » Design a more effective backup solution using centralized storage at headquarters
- » Provide fast and secure file replication capabilities

Solution

- » Deployment of 14 Riverbed's Steelhead appliances
- » Deployment of the Riverbed Central Management Console

Benefits

- » Reduced file transfer time by up to 85%
- » Reduced bandwidth usage by over 80%
- » Avoided approximately €30,000 in IT refresh costs
- » Consolidated eight remote servers
- » Simplified IT administration
- » Enhanced employee productivity



Aelia

Riverbed® Steelhead® Products Solve Bandwidth and Application Performance Problems for a Leading Travel Retail Company

Aelia (www.aelia.com) is one of the leading travel retailers in Europe with revenues of over 500 million euros from over 130 sales points. Specializing in Airport retail, Aelia is also active in mainline travel retail networks, catering to the needs of each environment like Airports, In-flight Sales, Euro tunnel and Ferries. Aelia operates at 16 airports in France, UK and in Poland. Its portfolio of goods covers all the needs of the modern traveler: Perfumes and cosmetics, spirits and tobacco, fashion and accessories, etc. The most famous international brands are represented in the Aelia range. Aelia also operates in-flight sales for the largest international and regional airline companies with its subsidiary AIR. Aelia is also present in the Eurostar train terminal at Gare du Nord. Aelia's ambition is to be identified as being the best partner by administrators of commercial zones for travelers.

Challenge: Accelerating and Consolidating Applications for a Distributed Workforce

With such a large distribution of retail and operational points, Aelia faces many IT challenges. Mr. Olivier Rideau, systems and production group manager at Aelia explained the situation in detail: "With a heavily distributed workforce, collaboration is consistently a challenge. Employees everywhere need to access files and our enterprise systems on a regular and timely basis. But that is sometimes very challenging, as issues such as WAN latency and bandwidth congestion often limit application performance." Aelia uses a wide range of applications within their business, but their key applications include SAP both in GUI (fat client) and intranet (thin client) modes. In addition the company uses Lotus notes as its email and collaboration platform.

Mr. Rideau also discussed Aelia's consolidation project, "We wanted to use the new storage bay implemented in our headquarters, Neuilly-sur-Seine, France to manage our data needs. We knew that consolidating storage resources from remote offices would help us control costs and simplify security management, but that it could also lead to performance issues. After all, when you move data further away from the end user, applications typically take longer to deliver the data."

"Aelia was able to remove servers and data backup equipment from 14 remote offices that did not have a local IT manager. We did this without compromising employee productivity."

Solution: Steelhead Appliances Improve Network Throughput and Accelerate Applications

Mr. Rideau recalled the process for analyzing WAN Optimization solutions to accelerate application performance. "We wanted to make sure we did a full analysis of the marketplace. We considered a number of alternatives, but primarily focused on Cisco and Riverbed. We considered the Cisco WAAS solution for testing during the summer of 2006. However, the Cisco solution was not mature enough to provide efficiency we needed."

"With Riverbed, the key attraction for Aelia was the Steelhead appliances' ability to focus on accelerating the SAP Web client. But we were surprised – we saw significant benefits across all of our key applications. In addition, our testing showed significant bandwidth savings." Mr. Rideau commented, "The results were quite superb. File transfer time was accelerated by about 8X (85% time reduction) on average. Subsequent edits to the file and its retransfers had practically LAN-like performance."

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"In addition, we tested the Central Management Console, which simplifies the process of deploying, configuring and managing Steelhead appliances all through

one Web-based interface," he added. "The deployment of the appliances consisted of basic configuration followed by adjustments of a few settings for our environment. Neither proxy configuration nor adjustment in the routing tables were necessary. Riverbed made deployment to sites across the globe completely painless. This combination of easy deployment with fast application performance made Riverbed the right solution."

Mr Rideau also talked about the success of the consolidation project. "Aelia was able to remove servers and data backup equipment from 14 remote offices that did not have a local IT manager. We did this without compromising employee productivity. In some ways, we actually improved productivity, as everyone was now working with the same data source. The acceleration in WAN traffic meant that employees could exchange large files without worrying about where the data is actually stored."

Benefits: A more productive workforce and centralized data

Riverbed's Steelhead appliances enabled Olivier Rideau and his team to accelerate application performance for a globally distributed workforce.

Mr Rideau was delighted by the performance improvements. "Many people just think about bandwidth savings. We certainly found Riverbed to be much more effective than any of the other solutions at optimizing bandwidth, but that is only half of the story. The combination of bandwidth optimization coupled with protocol acceleration resulted in the average throughput increase of 40X."

"Our IT department consolidated off-site media management and storage to the centralized data center, thereby saving money and easing compliance with security regulations. At the same time, centralized data management is both simpler and more secure," Rideau added.

As access to information is now accelerated, critical client data and the documentation can be centrally stored at the corporate data center, where all employees can access it. "With the installation of the Steelhead appliances, we have changed the way we deploy remote infrastructure and back up remote data. We no longer need to maintain as much remote IT infrastructure. This leads to a significantly enhanced user experience," concluded Rideau.

Return on Investment

The easily quantifiable benefits of the Steelhead appliance deployment that accrued to Aelia included non-renewal of eight servers at remote sites, and avoiding the need to purchase three new servers.

Additionally the company avoided having to buy more bandwidth at the main site. This meant avoiding \$50,000 in equipment costs as well as \$50,000 in annual fees. Savings on backup licenses no longer required at remote sites, and a significant reduction in system administration costs only served to make the ROI more attractive.

The qualitative and productivity benefits are higher than the direct benefits enumerated above. Making a much simpler ROI justification, Mr. Rideau commented "When we deploy Steelhead appliances, our workers can do their jobs faster, the number of complaints goes down, user satisfaction, and hence productivity, is much higher. You don't need a spreadsheet to see how good Riverbed's product is for the organization."

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SUMMARY

Aelia was facing challenges in the performance of applications across its distributed workforce. In addition, the company needed to address issues like increasing wide area network (WAN) bandwidth costs and security of sensitive documents at remote sites.

Deploying Riverbed's Steelhead Appliances improved responsiveness across many applications, including file sharing, SAP, and Lotus Notes. It simplified the data management by consolidating the storage centrally. This wide range of benefits, combined with easy deployment, made the rollout of Steelhead appliances a success across the organization.



About Riverbed

Riverbed delivers performance for the globally connected enterprise. With Riverbed, enterprises can successfully and intelligently implement strategic initiatives such as virtualization, consolidation, cloud computing, and disaster recovery without fear of compromising performance. By giving enterprises the platform they need to understand, optimize and consolidate their IT, Riverbed helps enterprises to build a fast, fluid and dynamic IT architecture that aligns with the business needs of the organization. Additional information about Riverbed (NASDAQ: RVBD) is available at www.riverbed.com.



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