

IN BRIEF

Industry

» Engineering

Challenges

» Poor application performance resulted in user frustration and reduced employee productivity

Solution

» Riverbed Steelhead appliances

Benefits

- » 30 times improvement in file download speeds
- » 2-3 times reduction in bandwidth utilization
- » 3.5 times reduction in file transfer time
- » Improved employee productivity



Al Abbar Group

Riverbed Steelhead appliances accelerate applications and increase employee productivity for engineering company

Al Abbar Group (www.alabbargroup.com) is a multi-national company with offices in the UAE, India and the Philippines. The company has more than 2500 employees and is a leading specialist in the engineering, manufacturing and installation of architectural building envelopes in the Middle East and Far East.

Challenge: Centralization of key applications results in poor application performance and reduced employee productivity

Al Abbar Group had centralized its main applications, including Microsoft SQL, Microsoft Exchange, ERP and CAD file sharing applications, to its data center in Dubai in order to simplify management of its IT systems and reduce the costs associated with a distributed environment.

Users at Al Abbar Group rely on fast and efficient access to key business processes including document sharing and communication. "With our applications centralized at our data center, our employees began to complain of lengthy delays in accessing documents and files over the WAN. Users were becoming frustrated and productivity began to suffer through lost time and money," explains Manoj Gopalakrishnan, Al Abbar

"We made big productivity gains, because employees no longer had to wait for key applications to arrive."

Group's ICT manager. "We recognized that simply upgrading the bandwidth would not improve application performance over the WAN as the issue was caused by file latency."

Solution: Riverbed WAN optimization solution results in improved application performance speeds

Al Abbar Group worked with its technology partner to explore a number of options for resolving the issue of slow-running applications over its WAN. The company first considered a virtualization approach using Citrix Presentation Server, and then investigated Citrix WANScaler. "Further investigation led us to Riverbed Technology and we decided to take advantage of the company's offer of a free trial evaluation," says Gopalakrishnan. Al Abbar Group tested the Riverbed® Steelhead® appliances at its data center and head office, both based in Dubai, and used two core applications: email and Microsoft file sharing.

"We chose Riverbed because of its ability to accelerate all our applications over the WAN in seconds."

The results were impressive, with the download time for a 10MB document reduced from five minutes to 40 seconds, and a 10MB email attachment delivered in around 60 seconds.

Benefits: Employee productivity improved with applications performing up to 30 times faster, and a 3 times reduction in bandwidth utilization improves efficiency of VoIP application

Al Abbar Group has installed Steelhead appliances at its data center, head office, steel factory and engineering office in Dubai, and at its engineering office in Mumbai, India. As a result all applications are now performing up to 30 times faster over the WAN and Al Abbar Group has reaped huge

benefits. "We chose the Riverbed solution because the Steelhead appliances enable us to access our applications over the WAN in seconds and, as a result, we've made big productivity gains with employees no longer waiting to access key applications, such as email and Microsoft file sharing,"

"We had no difficulties when it came to installation – everything was quick and easy, and the Riverbed Steelhead appliances are simple to use."

says Gopalakrishnan. "This has removed the frustration they were experiencing before we introduced Riverbed. You can't put a price on happy employees."

Al Abbar has also experienced a 2-3 times reduction in bandwidth utilization, enabling the company to use VoIP applications efficiently and effectively. "We have had a VoIP

application for some time, but until we implemented the Riverbed solution it was difficult to use because of bandwidth congestion. As Riverbed has reduced the amount of data traversing the WAN this is no longer the case," notes Gopalakrishnan.

Looking forward

Al Abbar is now in the process of centralizing its data back-ups to its data center. "Currently we rely on employees at the local branches to back up data to tape. The tapes are then transported to a secure location. In order to reduce the overall number of tapes used we rely upon a rotation system, whereby older tapes are often re-used. This can pose a number of risks through loss of tapes in transit or data accidentally being over written," explains Gopalakrishnan. "With Riverbed installed we can now move our data back-ups to the data center where we plan to perform disk-to-disk backups over the WAN on a nightly basis. Once this project is completed our data will be secure, easy to locate, and simple to retrieve if needed."

Al Abbar Group has been so impressed with the Steelhead appliances that the company plans to deploy an additional Steelhead appliance at its engineering office in Manila. There are also plans to evaluate Riverbed Steelhead Mobile client software and Cascade®. Steelhead Mobile gives remote workers LAN-like access to corporate files and applications from anywhere in the world, while Cascade is a powerful solution for network and application visibility, enabling companies to proactively identify and manage any application or network issues before users are impacted.

Al Abbar Group also plans to upgrade its Microsoft Office software suite, deploy a custom ERP package, and implement a disaster recovery system using an offsite backup solution. These new applications will also be accelerated using the Riverbed WAN optimization technology.

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.



2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011



SUMMARY

Slow-running applications over the company WAN meant that employees in Al Abbar Group's branch offices were frustrated, and their productivity suffered. After exploring several potential solutions, the company opted to deploy Riverbed Steelhead appliances in almost all of its offices. The result is that applications now run up to 30 times faster over the WAN and employee productivity has increased. The company now plans to introduce new applications and will use the Riverbed WAN optimization solution to accelerate them over the network.

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