

IN BRIEF

Industry

- » Digital video and audio solutions

Challenge

- » Deliver high-quality real-time and recorded video to employees worldwide

Solution

- » The Qumu-Riverbed solution captures and manages live and on-demand video, distributes Flash and Windows Media formats, and reduces the impact of video bandwidth consumption over the WAN

Benefits

- » Enterprise video streaming while reducing bandwidth utilization
- » Simplified video distribution with no additional remote office hardware
- » High-quality access to live and recorded videos for employees worldwide
- » Easy to use integrated solution helps reduce the impact of video traffic on the network



Avid

A Riverbed Technology and Qumu Solution Case Study

Avid is one of the best known names in the fields of digital audio and video technology and its solutions and software are used to make the most listened to, most watched, and most loved media in the world – from the most prestigious and award-winning feature films, music recordings, television shows, live concert tours and news broadcasts, to music and movies made at home. When it comes to industry pioneers and firms that have shaped the video and audio marketplace into what it is today, Avid stands head and shoulders above almost all other companies in the space.

The Avid brand is synonymous with high quality and professionalism, and it's extremely important to the company that its image both internally and externally reflects the firm's commitment to quality and a great experience. Today, the company's flagship digital video editing system is used by the majority of the world's professional film and television editors. Avid and its vast customer base of audio and video professionals have been recognized with every type of industry award and accolade possible, including Oscars, Emmys, and Grammys.

This solution case study discusses the partnership between Riverbed Technology and Qumu to deliver complete, enterprise-wide video communications solutions, and shows the benefits Avid has achieved by deploying this innovative solution to communicate more effectively and efficiently with its global workforce.

Challenges

Avid has a long tradition of communicating with its employees on a regular basis to keep them informed about company activities, corporate results, new products, and other important issues. Avid has been using video to communicate with its workforce for over ten years, and had originally been creating videos at headquarters and shipping them to remote offices, which was a slow and expensive process. The company then turned to webcasting, but employees in remote offices experienced the latency and jitter typical of many webcasting deployments, and the spike in bandwidth was placing a major burden on the company's private network.

"When you're speaking to an employee population that makes professional-grade products for the audio and video industry, we have a very discerning employee group so it has always been one of our goals to ensure that video quality is of the most importance," said Carter Holland, Vice President of Corporate Marketing for Avid. The company developed clear goals for improving its video communications to its workforce:

- Communicating with employees on a global basis
- Deploying a solution that would not adversely impact the corporate network
- Ensuring the deployed solution was more cost-effective than deploying streaming servers at locations around the world
- Enabling employees to view webcasts on a live as well as on-demand basis

"We have tried a lot of different things in terms of trying to communicate effectively with our employees," said Holland. "We've tried to use video as much as possible, and we used to do company meetings and shoot them on camera and then dub them and send them out to all our worldwide offices, which was very time consuming and very costly. It could take 2 ½ weeks to get the content out to all the offices—and by that time it would often be out of date."

Even with the deployment of new technologies for streaming video to employees across the globe, they found the process lacking in convenience and costly to scale as new office locations were opened. The company had been communicating with its global employee base by streaming a single Windows Media feed to each location and having employees all gather in an auditorium, lunch room, or meeting site to watch company meetings and executive presentations.

The importance of live video communications for important company meetings and executive presentations was very clear, but Avid also wanted to ensure that employees could access much of the video content on an on-demand basis at their own convenience.

Solution

Avid was already using Riverbed® Steelhead® appliances to optimize wide area network (WAN) traffic on its private network, and investigated the best way to support video traffic over the WAN. The firm conducted extensive research on available technologies and solutions and determined that the combination of Qumu's webcasting solution and its VideoEdge software with Riverbed's Steelhead appliances would be the ideal solution for achieving the firm's objectives.

Avid upgraded its existing Steelhead appliances with extra memory, storage, and a Riverbed Services Platform (RSP) license to create a viable and scalable infrastructure to manage video content and desktop streaming from the edges of their network. The RSP is uniquely suited to branch office server consolidation and virtualization. The Steelhead appliance is the only WAN optimization device to run industry-leading technology from VMware as the virtualization platform, taking advantage of the skills companies already have in house. Virtual services run in a protected zone and do not impact the resources needed for peak Steelhead appliance operations. The RSP also enables customers like Avid to run up to five different virtual machines at once, eliminating many more servers running core services from the branch office.

The existing business partnership between Qumu and Riverbed and the fact that the two technologies were tightly integrated into a single appliance was one of the key reasons Avid chose Qumu for webcasting video to employees. "From an overall infrastructure standpoint, the investment in Riverbed Steelhead appliances provides Avid with a lot of options," said Jerry Kelly, Avid Vice President and Chief Information Officer. "And we know from an architectural standpoint that they could become multi-purpose appliances, as opposed to just WAN accelerators."

Delivering high-quality video is becoming a clear differentiator for global companies like Avid. Riverbed Steelhead appliances enable video to be delivered in a high-quality, cost-effective, non-network intensive way while retaining high video and audio quality and meeting or exceeding the expectations of end users.

The Qumu and Riverbed Partnership

With proven expertise in deploying enterprise video and application acceleration, Qumu and Riverbed have partnered to deliver a complete video communications solution. The Qumu-Riverbed enterprise video solution captures and manages live and on-demand video, distributes Flash and Windows Media formats, and reduces the impact of video bandwidth consumption over the WAN. This complete solution can be deployed directly onto existing branch Steelhead appliances, which drives even greater return from existing Riverbed investments.

The Qumu and Riverbed solution delivers high-performance streaming media via the RSP on existing Steelhead appliances and provides a simple way for creating live video, recording it, and automatically archiving the resulting video broadcast.

Live and recorded content can be easily created using Qumu's Capture Studio. The video content can then be published and managed on Qumu's Video Control Center portal. Qumu software provides non-technical users with tools to create and manage their own video content — enabling employees working in remote offices to communicate and collaborate using the power of live and on-demand video.

Viewers can easily find and view live broadcasts or on-demand videos, as well as other related materials via a video portal. The video library is dynamically updated with new content each time a publisher adds a new item to the library. For any employees who may have missed a live broadcast, Qumu automatically archives the event for future viewing, and publishes the archive to the portal. This allows corporate networks to effectively accommodate video without impacting other business-critical applications.

For live content, Riverbed Steelhead appliances host a Qumu edge media server that can perform remote office stream-splitting. This reduces the number of streams over the WAN to one stream per remote location and, therefore, tremendously reduces the amount of WAN bandwidth required to serve live streaming. For on-demand streaming, the Steelhead appliance utilizes Riverbed's patented data streamlining technology to store downloaded content so that subsequent remote users can obtain a local copy of the video. Data streamlining optimizes all WAN traffic, typically reducing bandwidth consumption by 60-95 percent. It works by reducing the transmission of redundant bytes and by optionally prioritizing data based on bandwidth and latency requirements.

For live and on-demand video streaming, the joint solution reduces enterprise WAN video traffic by as much as 98%. For example, a live webcast that otherwise would take multiple streams and consume bandwidth is reduced to a single stream per branch that can be split locally to many viewers, without the need for additional hardware for video content distribution.

Benefits

Avid has achieved a number of important benefits as a result of deploying its video solution and communicating with employees in a more effective way. These benefits include:

- Avid has reduced its bandwidth requirements considerably
- The firm is saving considerable costs by not having to deploy large numbers of Windows Media servers at locations around the world
- Higher employee satisfaction with corporate communications initiatives, and favorable employee response to accessing high-quality video from their desktops
- The use of the Riverbed appliances has enabled Avid to provide high bandwidth content to geographically-dispersed locations more efficiently
- Pre-staging content to remote locations is now possible, which is often done the night before a big company event

"Bandwidth and its cost are always factors in everything we deploy," said Pat Delaney, Avid Global Client Services Lead. "So anything we can do to push more down the pipe and keep costs down is a win/win in my book. The Steelhead appliances optimize all of our video traffic, and because we are optimizing all of our WAN traffic, we now have more available bandwidth to deliver content to our end users worldwide."

Avid has been able to dramatically reduce the bandwidth going back-and-forth between remote offices and the corporate headquarters, and Avid does not have to deploy and maintain physical servers to run local services in all the different locations around the world.

Avid has achieved far more than they originally expected with their deployment of technology for distributing high quality video content to employees around the world. By deploying an integrated solution combining WAN optimization with video distribution, the organization is achieving increased efficiencies across the corporate network that is saving on costs while postponing or eliminating the need for deploying new hardware or provisioning additional bandwidth.

In addition, the technology provides Avid a great deal of flexibility from an infrastructure standpoint because the Riverbed Steelhead devices now function as multipurpose appliances. And perhaps most importantly, Avid is able to provide a very rich communications experience for employees right at their desktops—and for an employee base that has extensive knowledge, experience, and familiarity with professional quality video content that is critical.

"From an overall infrastructure standpoint, the investment in Riverbed Steelhead appliances provides Avid with a lot of options," said Kelly. "And we know from an architectural standpoint that they could become multi-purpose appliances, as opposed to just WAN accelerators."

One of Avid's key goals for the future is to enable employees around the world to have the ability to create and upload employee-generated video content to the video portal. "This is just the beginning, it's going to lead us to enabling more employee-generated video content—this could be our own little YouTube for the enterprise," said Delaney."

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.

SUMMARY

Avid has a long tradition of communicating with its employees on a regular basis to keep them informed about company activities, corporate results, new products, and other important issues. But Avid was not always able to communicate with all employees worldwide through video, or to do so in a timely way.

The company was already using Riverbed Steelhead appliances to optimize WAN traffic on its private network, and investigated the best way to support video traffic over the WAN.

By upgrading its existing Steelhead appliances with an RSP license, Avid was able to create a viable and scalable infrastructure to manage video content and desktop streaming from the edges of their network. The Qumu and Riverbed solution delivers high-performance streaming media and provides a simple way for Avid to create live video, record it, and automatically archive video broadcasts for later viewing on desktops throughout the enterprise.



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