

IN BRIEF

Industry

- » Finance

Challenges

- » Centralize control of worldwide IT infrastructure from Stockholm, Sweden
- » Consolidate a highly distributed architecture without disrupting end users

Solution

- » Replace branch office IT infrastructure with Riverbed Steelhead appliances

Benefits

- » Reduced management and maintenance costs through a simplified global IT infrastructure
- » Improved productivity in remote offices from LAN-like network performance.



Investor AB

Riverbed Steelhead® Appliances are the Missing Link for IT Infrastructure Consolidation at Investor AB

Background

Investor AB (“Investor”) is the largest industrial holding company in the Nordic region. For almost a century, its business concept has been to build best-in-class companies in sectors where it has a strong knowledge and networking advantage. Investor AB is a leading shareholder in a number of multinational companies, including AstraZeneca, Ericsson and SEB. Investor also conducts private equity activities in North America, Europe and Asia.

As a major European holding company, Investor maintains offices in Stockholm, Amsterdam, London, New York, Tokyo, Hong Kong and Palo Alto, California. Every office requires a significant investment in IT infrastructure such as Microsoft Exchange servers, file servers and tape backup equipment. The offices are connected through a T1 or E1 to a global MPLS network.

Investor’s IT organization faced the daunting challenge of managing an expensive, widely-distributed IT infrastructure. The need for LAN-like performance in every office had dramatically increased the complexity of application roll-outs, upgrades, and security enforcement across the company.

The Serverless Office Challenge

The challenge for Investor’s IT department has been to implement a centralized IT operation with the speed and power of a distributed and flexible IT infrastructure. “At the same time, we

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have to live up to expectations of an up-to-date IT environment and help support continuous efforts to streamline operations,” says Fredrik Kenmo, Sr. Systems Engineer at Investor. “To do this you are dependent on the availability of local technical personnel for on-site support, especially in case of severe hardware or system failures.”

“When I first heard about Riverbed, we were in the process of planning for the relocation of one of our branches,” explains Fredrik. “As I learned more about the Steelhead appliance, I realized that this might well be the missing link needed to take our serverless initiative to the next level. Before Riverbed this simply wasn’t feasible except for high bandwidth locations or when connecting one or two people to a central location.”

In addition to local IT support, contingency planning in this kind of environment is both difficult and expensive. For example, if hardware is replaced more frequently, it adds to operational costs. Fredrik points out, “If we were able to leverage the infrastructure we have in place in our main offices (Hong Kong, New York and Stockholm), we would have fewer sites to worry about. It would be much easier to implement redundancy where we feel it is needed. Another advantage is, of course, that more users would be able to benefit from the redundant components.”

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In addition to attaining a centralized IT architecture, Investor was interested in Riverbed for several other key projects:

- Ensure a successful rollout of VOIP and unified messaging solutions
- Leverage recently deployed MPLS WAN
- Improve backup and data protection policies

Fredrik had already looked at other vendors' WAN optimization products, but found that they were primarily compression and QoS or packet shaping products. Since Investor operates a global MPLS WAN, he felt those products add little value and wouldn't really be solving the right set of problems. His decision was made easier by two factors: Gartner spoke in positive terms about Riverbed, and Hewlett Packard – Investor's preferred hardware provider – had formed a close relationship with Riverbed.

Solution: Steelhead Appliances from Riverbed Technology

After reading about Riverbed's Steelhead appliances, Fredrik thought they might be the solution to his multi-faceted problem with remote offices. The problem was not one-dimensional; he had to address file system performance, email performance and bandwidth optimization, as well as enable the centralization of those key pieces of IT infrastructure. Because of the many issues under consideration, data reduction for bandwidth optimization, TCP optimization, and application protocol optimization for latency were all essential to making this consolidation effort successful. Riverbed's unique combination of technologies includes all of these optimizations.

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surprised by how simple the deployment was," said Fredrik. "I expected a complex integration, but it only required that I give each appliance an IP address. It was only a matter of minutes before I had the boxes up and running."

After the deployment, Fredrik personally tested the new appliances by moving his own home directories and his Exchange 2003 mailbox from his home office servers in Stockholm to Investor's site in Amsterdam. Again, he was surprised. "Even after moving my mailbox and home directory, the performance is virtually like being on the LAN," he says. "I know that Riverbed claims that kind of performance, but to see it was quite amazing. I wouldn't have ever tried centralizing those servers before, but now I see it can be done."

Future Plans : Multi-Phase Steelhead Roll-Out

Now that Investor has proven the performance of Steelhead appliances, Fredrik is planning a multi-phase IT centralization project. Remote office infrastructure will be removed and replaced with regionally centralized infrastructure in New York, Hong Kong and the Stockholm headquarters, thereby creating "serverless" remote offices. According to Fredrik, "That would allow us to deliver higher levels of service without having to outsource tasks like server management."

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



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SUMMARY

Riverbed's Steelhead appliances enabled Investor to successfully centralize its key IT infrastructure, without impacting end users.

The result was a simpler global infrastructure on three continents that was cheaper to maintain, easier to manage and allowed improved backup and data retention policies – all without impacting Investor's current MPLS WAN or user base.