

## IN BRIEF

### Industry

- » Professional Services (Transportation Consulting)

### Challenge

- » Enable mobile workers to efficiently access data and collaborate with coworkers
- » Eliminate the frustration of sharing data to remote offices as well as on the road
- » Find a solution that could be managed by a small IT team

### Solution

- » Steelhead Mobile has been deployed to 40 of 80 employees
- » A Steelhead appliance was deployed in seven offices

### Benefits

- » Workers on the road, at home, or in the branch office can easily collaborate on 30 to 50 megabyte documents
- » Files that used to take up to five minutes to download when out of the office can now be downloaded in as fast as two seconds
- » The IT team can easily manage the solution and can maintain its centralized data model

**Nelson | Nygaard**  
consulting associates



# Nelson Nygaard

## Riverbed® Steelhead® Mobile Accelerates Applications Everywhere for Nationwide Consulting Firm

### Overview

Nelson Nygaard Consulting Associates Inc., headquartered in San Francisco California, is distinguished by its commitment to planning transportation systems and identifying mobility improvements that help build and support vibrant, sustainable communities.

A fully multi-modal approach, drawn from the real world experiences of industry specialists, is a hallmark of every Nelson Nygaard project. Covering all modes of transportation, Nelson Nygaard specializes in transit, transit oriented development, accessibility and tools that balance the needs of each mode.

Since its inception in 1987, Nelson Nygaard has grown into a nationally recognized firm with five offices covering North America. Today, personnel work with a wide variety of clients including public transit operators, regional and state planning organizations, city and county municipal departments and private sector customers. Nelson Nygaard provides transportation specialists in transit service, accessible and specialized transportation, multi-modal transportation, smart growth projects and transit-oriented development, program management, financial planning, public participation and information.

### Challenge: Enabling Effective Collaboration Everywhere

"We originally deployed Steelhead appliances in our branch offices to deal with poor performance of applications and to enable our employees to collaborate. I suspect that is how most people experience Riverbed to begin with," said Raj Singh, CIO and partner at Nelson Nygaard. "We currently have 80 employees across seven offices, and we're planning to open two more offices next year. The branches all have T1 lines connected to the Internet using SonicWALL VPNs. Needless to say, application performance over the WAN was poor in these offices. Our users typically collaborate on 30 – 50 megabyte documents such as AutoCAD, ESRI, and Adobe files, and without Riverbed, it was painful for teams located in different offices to collaborate on projects. Users were constantly calling and complaining to the IT team. Employees were getting so frustrated that they were taking matters into their own hands and buying hard drives for branch offices – creating insecure copies of data. And, given that we're an IT team of three, that just wasn't a situation we could live with long-term."

**"For us, mobility isn't an issue to be dealt with sometime in the future; being able to collaborate while out of the office is here and now. It's how a business like ours can compete. So as we were examining wide-area data services solutions for our company, a solution for mobile workers was a requirement."**

But for the IT team at Nelson Nygaard, this was just part of the challenge. Singh continued, "At any given time, we can expect half of our company to be travelling. They might be on a job site, at a client location, or anywhere in between. For us, mobility isn't an issue to be dealt with sometime in the future; being able to collaborate while out of the office is here and now. It's how a business like ours can compete. So, as we were examining WAN optimization solution alternatives for our company, the availability of a solution for mobile workers, plus remote offices, was a requirement."



Think fast.™

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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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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### Solution: Steelhead Products Provide Acceleration for Mobile and Branch Users

Singh recalled his evaluation process. "We're pretty methodical here, so when it came time to look for an acceleration solution, we left no stone unturned. We ended up evaluating Packeteer, Cisco, and Riverbed. We figured that by bringing three alternatives in-house, we could get a good sense of the different features and functionality that were available on the market.

**"It was clear that Cisco's WAAS product too difficult to manage, even in a relatively small deployment."**

troubleshoot this way, but what about the average IT manager? We needed a solution that we could get up and running easily, and manage without too much effort. It was clear that Cisco's WAAS product was too difficult to manage, even in a relatively small deployment."

"We had a little more luck with the Packeteer product. We had it in-house and running. It provided some optimization, and users noticed some difference," continued Singh, "But when one of their engineers came in to troubleshoot, I discovered that the Packeteer devices are just souped up Windows servers. How could I add more servers to our infrastructure? With all the work that goes into patching and maintaining Windows servers, this would make IT's life much harder even if it solved some of the problems in the branch office."

Singh then talked about his experience with Riverbed: "Riverbed's Steelhead products were much easier to get up and running. This was true for both the appliance and the mobile software. Both products simply worked out of the box. Within a week we had all of the appliances up and running in our remote offices. While Riverbed helped us with a few of them, our team comfortably took over the rest of the installation. And with the mobile software, we could just push it out to user machines once we installed the Steelhead Mobile controller. Once we did those simple tasks, our users in branch offices and mobile users were getting accelerated performance to the data they needed the most."

"We first asked Cisco to demonstrate its WAAS offering. The Cisco specialist had trouble getting his demonstration working. After a little while, he started opening seven or eight DOS-style windows in order to troubleshoot. Right then, I knew this product wasn't for us. It may be fine for a Cisco specialist to

**"Downloading an IT budget or a project worksheet, something like a 3 megabyte document, would take upwards of 5 minutes. It was unbearable. With Riverbed Steelhead Mobile, the first time I downloaded one of these documents took about 40 seconds. After that, uploading future versions – even with changes – took just 2 or 3 seconds."**

### Benefits: Happy, More Productive Users and Simpler IT Management

"The performance results were simply amazing," commented Singh. "It doesn't matter where in the world a Nelson Nygaard employee is, he or she can access the data and information they need. After all, when you're on the road you don't have control of what quality Internet access you have. You might be in a hotel with decent bandwidth or on a spotty Wi-Fi connection in a café. With Riverbed Steelhead Mobile, accessing data is painless."

Steelhead Mobile also helped Nelson Nygaard give more flexibility to their users. "Steelhead Mobile also makes a great supporting tool for users who want to work from home. Working from the road is a necessity these days; but many of our users also want to be able to work from home in the event of a pressing deadline or just the need to take care of some personal items during the day. With Steelhead Mobile, they can be out of the office but still in the loop."

Paul Jewel, COO of Nelson Nygaard, commented, "I remember when Raj first deployed Steelhead Mobile to my machine. Almost immediately, I emailed him and said, 'I don't know what you did to my machine but getting documents has never been easier. Thank you!'"

Singh put this type of user feedback into quantifiable terms as well. “Where I live, I connect to the Internet via satellite. Downloading an IT budget or a project worksheet—roughly a 3 megabyte document—would take upwards of five minutes. It was unbearable. With Riverbed Steelhead Mobile, the first time I downloaded one of these documents took about 40 seconds. After that, uploading future versions – even with changes – took just two or three seconds. Steelhead Mobile makes it possible for me to work out of the office.”

“Because of these great results,” noted Singh, “we’re going to deploy the Steelhead Mobile client to every user’s laptop. We’ve currently deployed it to all of the partners’ and principals’ machines, as they travel the most, but we will deliver this benefit to everyone in the firm.”

There were also IT benefits to Steelhead products that go beyond user satisfaction. Singh elaborated. “Clearly, a benefit of Riverbed’s product is how little management effort it requires. This is true for both the appliance as well as Steelhead Mobile. The reporting is good in case we have to troubleshoot – which we do every once in a while – but it also serves as a great management tool. We can quickly get data on how well we’re optimizing traffic. Overall it’s a hands-off solution.

“The other benefit,” continued Singh, “is that Riverbed helps us maintain a centralized data model. With LAN-like performance of applications in remote offices and on the road, users are no longer compelled to try and keep data locally. We’re not forced to put new, additional servers out at the edge. This means our data is more secure and our IT infrastructure is easier to manage. The payback on Steelhead appliances and Steelhead Mobile is immediate and obvious.”

#### **SUMMARY**

**Nelson Nygaard needed a solution to accelerate application performance for mobile workers as well as branch office employees. After closely examining alternatives from Cisco and Packeteer, Nelson Nygaard chose to deploy Riverbed’s Steelhead Mobile software and Steelhead appliances.**

**With Steelhead products, employees everywhere get LAN-like application performance for Nelson Nygaard’s most important applications. The IT team was easily able to manage the company-wide deployment on their own, and gets the additional benefit of avoiding the distribution of IT servers to the edge.**