

IN BRIEF

Industry

- » Legal Services

Challenges

- » Migration from distributed computing infrastructure to co-location
- » Latency associated with Citrix XenApp and Microsoft Exchange

Solution

- » 11 Steelhead appliances deployed across the U.S.
- » Comprehensive understanding of network performance with Riverbed Central Management Console

Benefits

- » Remote WAN users experiencing LAN-like speeds; no productivity or performance loss from move to co-location
- » Log-in times for remote users improved by 8x
- » Monthly network traffic reduced from – up to 4 terabytes down to 900 gigabytes
- » 77 percent reduction in email traffic; 45 percent reduction in Citrix ICA traffic
- » Costs avoided as existing bandwidth is sufficient for expansion



Prommis

Riverbed Steelhead Products Accelerate Citrix XenApp, Allowing Growth without Bandwidth Expansion

The Prommis® Solutions family of companies (www.prommis.com) is a leading national provider of knowledge processing services to the real estate finance industry, enabling many aspects of the real estate finance lifecycle through its suite of technology-enabled services. Prommis companies partner with mortgage servicers, asset managers, investors, insurers and law firms to offer default processing services, home retention, REO closing and other mortgage-related solutions.

Most of the mortgage foreclosure and bankruptcy processing in the U.S. is currently handled by law firms that specialize in that type of work. Traditionally, these firms rely on their own staffs of processors, technicians, paralegals and lawyers to manage the foreclosure and bankruptcy transactions.

Against this backdrop, Prommis Solutions offers law firms innovative options and cost-effective, scalable services that are performed by a highly trained staff of processors and paraprofessionals while leveraging its superior technology across multiple states. As a result, Prommis Solutions allows its clients to outsource the non-legal aspects of default servicing, while allowing the firms to focus on their core competencies.

Challenge: Centralizing applications

With more than 1,500 employees working at 16 U.S. locations, Prommis Solutions depends on a wide area network (WAN) to connect its offices, staff, and systems. Having grown through acquisitions, the company's current challenge is to move from a variety of legacy applications and a distributed computing environment (six server rooms in various U.S. cities) to a common platform of applications based at a secure co-location center in Chicago. For the end users, this means that instead of accessing applications on a server in their own facility, they will now access them over the WAN. The company's critical applications are Microsoft Exchange 2007 and Dynamics AX along with SQL Server-based legal case management and document management systems.

Other providers told us they could accelerate ICA traffic, but only Riverbed actually could.

Prommis' IT professionals were well aware of the potential drawbacks of this approach for the end users. "Network traffic that traverses over long distances encounters significantly more latency than across a LAN," says Ken Meszaros, vice president of IT at Prommis Solutions. Even

before the migration to co-location began, some Prommis employees in the company's El Cajon, California office used the WAN to access an application residing on a server in Atlanta. Even the process of logging in was painful. "The system would have to transmit the user's profile across a WAN data circuit, and that could take over 30 minutes to log in," explains Lincoln Higdon, ITS infrastructure manager at Prommis. "The users were not happy with that."

Prommis' IT team put together a two-part technological solution to the latency problems normally experienced over a WAN: WAN optimization technology from Riverbed Technology and Citrix XenApp thin client technology on remote users' computers. "Not everything is handled by Citrix, so we looked at multiple options for accelerating both non-Citrix and Citrix traffic over the WAN," explains Higdon.

Solution: Riverbed accelerates ICA traffic

Accelerating Citrix XenApp (ICA) traffic and the ability to deploy the unit in-line turned out to be the key selection criteria for the WAN optimization solution. As it turned out, of the products Prommis evaluated, only Riverbed® Steelhead® appliances could successfully do this. Some vendors told Prommis

right up front, “We can accelerate every bit of your traffic except Citrix,” Higdon says. “Citrix packets are compressed,” he explains, “and at the time only Citrix claimed they could do anything with that data stream.” Naturally Prommis looked at Citrix’s WAN optimization offering, but “even though we tried multiple attempts with Citrix to deploy their solution, we were never successful at getting the expected results, so we were unable to move forward,” Higdon adds.

Co-location is working because users are still experiencing LAN-like speeds.

“Juniper Networks claimed their product could be leveraged to accelerate XenApp, but it had similar challenges. While we were evaluating these devices, Riverbed released an update that allowed their appliances the ability to accelerate Citrix traffic, so we added them to our evaluation. After a quick installation process, they quickly demonstrated that they were indeed able to accelerate Citrix traffic and in no time had a solution deployed in-line.”

Prommis conducted a Riverbed proof of concept. After installing multiple Steelhead appliances in a few days, the company conducted a two-week pilot program that clearly demonstrated the potential of this technology. “The Steelhead appliances could actually support our architecture and deliver results, whereas other alternatives just couldn’t provide similar results within our environment,” says Meszaros. The Steelhead appliances accelerated all of Prommis’ network traffic, including Citrix XenApp.

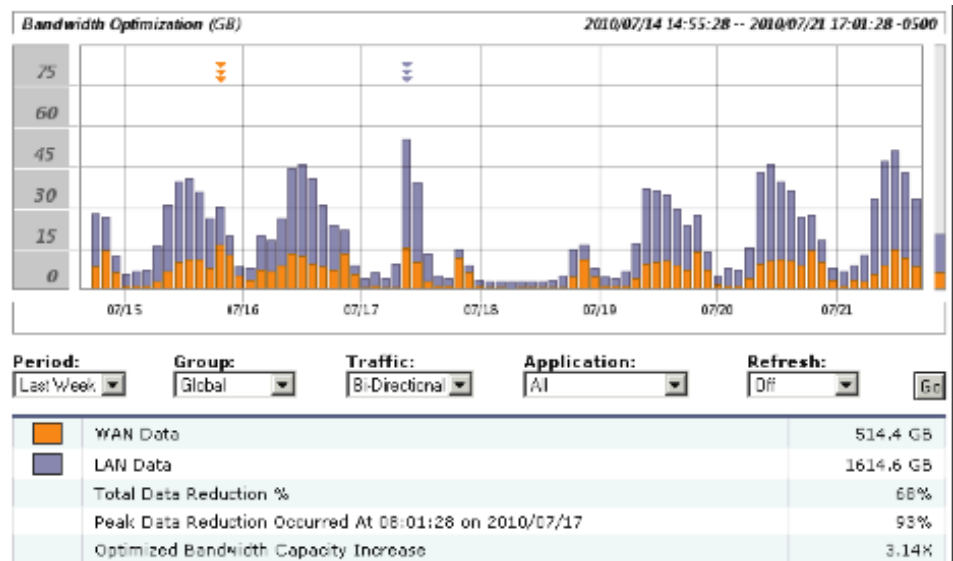
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Benefits: Improved performance, speed and user experience

Having seen the value from the pilot program, Prommis implemented Riverbed Steelhead appliances across its multiple locations. Riverbed assisted in the implementation to ensure a successful rollout and to help Prommis get the most out of its investment.

The initial Riverbed implementation consisted of seven Steelhead appliances (two large appliances at Prommis’ co-location and backup data center facilities, and five smaller ones at its larger regional locations). Prommis has since added four more appliances to new locations, for a total of 11 Steelhead appliances in all. The company is actively progressing with its migration to the co-location strategy.

The Riverbed implementation has resulted in average bandwidth reductions between 50 and 70 percent, with peak reductions as high as 90 percent. Citrix traffic has been reduced by 45 percent. Overall, monthly network traffic has been reduced from up to four terabytes down to 900 gigabytes.



One of the most important benefits of the Riverbed implementation has been its positive effect on the end users. “The combination of reduced bandwidth, along with the application streamlining and transport streamlining performed by the Steelhead appliances, allows Prommis employees to work at LAN-like speeds – even when data and resources exist hundreds or thousands of miles away,” says Higdon. This has

greatly improved the users' experience because the latency that might have caused a loss of productivity has been avoided. The log-in process that formerly took 30 plus minutes, for example, takes only a few minutes now. "The users are very aware of what the Steelhead appliances do," adds Higdon. "If one is unavailable for any reason, they can immediately notice the difference and want it restored immediately."

Other benefits of the Riverbed solution include a better understanding of network performance as well as more effective IT planning as Prommis grows. "My management team is driven by metrics from monthly reports," says Higdon. "The Riverbed Central Management Console gathers details from all of the Steelhead appliances and it can report, corporate-wide, the percentage of our Citrix, Email, File, HTTP and print traffic that we are accelerating and how much bandwidth we are optimizing - information that I need for my reports." Having this information about what is going on at every facility allows the IT team to plan more effectively for the company's growth. "As the remote sites expand and add users, I can see exactly what sort of circuit I need there," Higdon explains. "Riverbed helps me avoid dropping in a fractional DS3 or a Metro-E into a site where all we need is one or two T1s. The cost savings from that monthly expense is substantial." The company is now evaluating the Riverbed Cascade® solution. "That would provide me with even more visibility data on how the network and applications are doing, right down to the systems, switches, and ports," adds Higdon.

Riverbed support has been phenomenal.

The Riverbed implementation is paying for itself in costs that have been avoided or eliminated now that bandwidth is being used more effectively. For example, even as additional employees have joined the company, WAN circuit upgrades have been unnecessary and Prommis still has sufficient bandwidth for growth.

For the Prommis' IT department, Riverbed offers an additional benefit that the end users don't see: excellent technical support. "With Riverbed, I don't have same support woes as I do with other companies," says Higdon. "Riverbed support has been phenomenal."

SUMMARY

To ensure the success of its co-location strategy, Prommis Solutions wanted better application responsiveness across the WAN. Key to this was a WAN optimization solution that was able to accelerate Citrix XenApp (ICA) traffic.

After evaluating a number of WAN optimization solutions, Prommis chose Riverbed Steelhead appliances. The company installed two large Steelhead appliances at the company's co-location and backup data facilities, and nine smaller ones at its regional locations. Riverbed worked with the company throughout the proof of concept and installation processes to ensure a successful rollout.

With the Steelhead appliances in place, remote users are now experiencing LAN-like speeds. To them, it is as if their applications are still housed locally even though they now reside on server hundreds to thousands of miles away. The Citrix traffic over the WAN has been reduced by 45 percent, and overall traffic is down by more than 60 percent. Because the company's WAN bandwidth is being used more efficiently, Prommis has been able to grow its business without WAN circuit upgrades.



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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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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.
Venture House
Arlington Square
Downshire Way
Bracknell RG12 1WA, UK
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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