

LEADERSHIP PROFILE

BY DAVID SILVERBERG

ANYONE LIVING AROUND THE WASHINGTON, DC, AREA KNOWS THE BELTWAY, AN OFTEN-CONGESTED EIGHT-LANE ROAD, FOUR IN EACH DIRECTION, THAT RINGS THE CITY. BUILT IN THE 1960S, THE HIGHWAY IS VASTLY OVERUSED, RESULTING IN RUSH HOUR TIE-UPS AND FREQUENT DELAYS.

But what if, by some magic, it was possible to compress the traffic on three of those four lanes into one, freeing up new space and providing even greater capacity?

It isn't possible with cars and trucks, but it is possible with data and that's the specialty of Riverbed Technology, headquartered in San Francisco, Calif. The company finds ways to optimize the performance and utility of networks, applications and storage, providing clients with new capabilities and capacity.

A prime example of this occurred with the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) directorate of the Department of Homeland Security when it added the collection of 10 fingerprints to its data collection.

Just adding those 10 fingerprints sent so much data to the agency's data centers that it "almost brought the network to its knees," recalled William Hartwell, general manager and senior director of federal markets for Riverbed Technology.

In a crisis like that, "The traditional approach has been: 'Well, you know, the networking people will go acquire their stuff; and the application folks are going to go write their applications or buy them; and the storage folks are going to go and do their thing.' But they're not always well integrated as to how they either plan or procure the IT to back it up, not to mention the telecommunications challenge, which can be fairly daunting," he said.

Riverbed stepped in and over a week-end implemented its solutions at a number of airports, optimizing the collection, storage and processing of the data. "All the traffic, all the data, was compressed and accelerated down to one lane," Hartwell noted. "We gave them three lanes back."

Sounding the riverbed

Founded in 2004 by two partners, Jerry Kennelly and Steve McCanne, Riverbed has a host of private sector clients and also provides its expertise to the public sector,



WILLIAM HARTWELL

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including the Defense Department and intelligence agencies. It went public in 2006 and in 2009 was ranked the 21st fastest growing company in North America by the accounting and consulting firm, Deloitte. According to Deloitte, Riverbed's revenues grew from \$2.6 million in 2004 to \$333 million in 2008—a 12,911 percent growth in just four years. Expectations are that its 2009 earnings reached at least \$400 million.

Heading Riverbed's federal effort in Reston, Va., is William Hartwell.

Hartwell's career began at Cisco Systems, San Jose, Calif., where he worked for eight years in a variety of marketing capacities and developed expertise in federal government markets. From Cisco he went to Symbol Technologies, where he served as vice president of federal government sales. When Symbol was purchased by Motorola, Schaumburg, Ill., Hartwell was named Motorola's vice president of business and channel development.

Hartwell is excited by Riverbed's activities, and that excitement is evident when he describes the company's activities and capabilities, especially when it comes to

his work with CBP, which he sees as being on the cutting edge of federal information technology. "They have one of the toughest missions on the planet," he observed, noting CBP's numerous sites and demands on its systems.

"They [CBP] are leading the way as far as how you can visualize the environment and the impact of the network in solving your problems and furthering your mission, then virtualizing IT infrastructure—call it modernization, if you want—and consolidating, as well," he noted. "And then, once they've figured that out, they want to optimize and accelerate. And we can help them in every phase of that environment.

"That's what's exciting about our technology right now. We're very non-intrusive and we go into the existing infrastructure of telecommunication and bandwidth implementations. So you can really do more with less, if you think about it that way, because we can then start to provide tremendous optimization and acceleration of existing infrastructure. We can give them ways to—for example—take servers out of the infrastructure, which from a security standpoint is not a bad thing. We can give them ways to utilize existing telecommunications bandwidth much more efficiently than we are utilizing it today, and that's important in some of the work that they do."

From river to cloud

In the future, Hartwell sees cloud computing as the dominant trend in information technology, and Riverbed, with its proprietary Steelhead appliances that cut bandwidth usage and accelerate applications, well positioned for it.

"Everyone is going to have a definition of what a cloud is" Hartwell said. "I think of a cloud as a big data center in the sky [that you can draw on] when you need to get that data out to your users most efficiently. To me, the cloud brings in some other very important things: Virtualization, obviously, is very important; also, mobility.

"So do you have the ability to accelerate or optimize either that application or that data transfer from the biggest data center in the cloud to the furthest, most remote mobile worker, wherever they might be? That is where this is all going, in my opinion." **HST**