

IN BRIEF

Industry

- » Professional Services (Legal)

Challenges

- » Enable employees to experience LAN-like application performance in any of Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer's worldwide locations

Solution

- » Deploy 32 Steelhead appliances worldwide at Freshfields' offices

Benefits

- » Up to 10x faster document downloads
- » 400% increase in bandwidth capacity, deferring future WAN upgrades
- » Centralised management saves time and simplifies IT administration



Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer

Riverbed Improves Productivity, Collaboration and Network Management Across Legal Firm's Worldwide Offices

Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer (www.freshfields.com) is a leading international law firm. With more than 2,400 lawyers across the world, the firm serves both national and multinational companies, financial institutions and governments.

Freshfields' aim is to provide a seamless service to its clients, regardless of the size of the team of lawyers working on a transaction or their location. Yet with 28 offices around the world, ensuring that everybody receives the same high level of service provision and can collaborate easily with one another is no simple task for the IT team.

Challenge: Overcome Latency and Reduce Network Traffic

The Freshfields team had a significant problem with performance of applications over the wide area network (WAN). Not only was the WAN reaching full capacity, but high latency – particularly to its Asian offices – was hindering user productivity. "We were implementing a number of new applications and were having performance issues due to WAN latency," recalls David Enders, Freshfields' senior technical consultant.

"By deploying Riverbed in every office in one go, we could guarantee that everyone was able to receive the same reliable service day in, day out."

In search of a solution, Enders had been investigating the benefits of WAN optimisation products. Yet nothing he had seen lived up to the vendor hype. "The cost of products was high and the return was poor," he notes. "We looked at other systems, but the products didn't do what they said and only increased bandwidth capacity by 11%, not the 40% promised."

Solution: Steelhead Appliances Eliminate Network Latency and Improve Throughput

Enders then researched Riverbed, which offers WAN optimisation solutions that tackle more than just WAN optimisation or network compression. He was particularly impressed with the way Riverbed's Steelhead WAN optimisation appliances streamline data, which differs from the technique used by other providers. "Riverbed's appliances come with disks that keep the data on the box and could remain there for a longer period of time," says Enders. "It looked like a smarter approach."

After a successful evaluation of Riverbed's Steelhead appliances on two systems – one in London and a second in Hong Kong – Enders decided not only to roll out the appliances in those countries troubled by network latency, but also to install them at every Freshfields office worldwide.

Even more challenging was Enders' aim to complete the installation and have the appliances up and running smoothly in less than three months. "By deploying Riverbed in every office in one go, we could guarantee that everyone was able to receive the same reliable service day in, day out," he explains.

The Steelhead appliances were configured to Freshfields' specifications by Riverbed before shipping to Freshfields' offices to minimise the time needed to configure the appliances on site. The roll out took five weeks.

"Traffic reduction is a clear second benefit, as we have seen a fourfold increase in network capacity."

Benefits: Latency Avoidance, Traffic Reduction and Consolidation of IT Infrastructure

Enders reports good bandwidth capacity and a reduction in latency at every office around the world. "Before it might take a lawyer eight to nine minutes to download a large PDF across the WAN; the system worked but it was slow. Now these documents come across in seconds."

The power of Riverbed enables applications to perform as if they are hosted locally, rather than several thousand miles away in the London office. Indeed, Enders has already conducted an experiment and proved this works. "We did a test a few days ago where we downloaded the same file in 28 offices and found that we could do it in more or less the same amount of time in every office," he comments. Users have also reported a noticeable improvement in the performance of applications.

"Time to transfer a 2 MB file over the WAN has improved from 210 seconds to three seconds, quite a remarkable feat and proving the LAN-like experience over the WAN."

is a clear second benefit, as we have seen a fourfold increase in network capacity; some offices have seen a two to threefold increase in speed. Time to transfer a 2MB file over the WAN has improved from 210 seconds to three seconds, quite a remarkable feat and proving the LAN-like experience over the WAN," reveals Enders. This is something we never saw from other WAN accelerator tools. The entire 'combined' international network is now seeing around 3.5 times bandwidth improvements and individual offices can range from 2.7 times to more than 14 times depending on the local traffic profile."

Wide-area Data Services may enable Freshfields to consolidate its IT infrastructure as well. "By having more bandwidth available and a cost-effective system to improve performance in place, we may be able to reduce the number of servers in each office."

Another useful feature of the Steelhead appliance is the central management console (CMC). The CMC enables administrators to manage all the appliances from one screen. "It's a neat tool, we can see from a single screen if any office is experiencing a problem, or do administrative work centrally and push out to all sites automatically.

"If you want to increase WAN performance and provide a reliable user experience, there is pretty much nothing you can do without installing some kind of solution like Riverbed," concludes Enders.

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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

Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer is a leading international law firm. With over 2,400 lawyers across the world, it serves both national and multinational companies, financial institutions and governments.

With over 28 offices Worldwide, ensuring that everybody receives the same high level of service provision and can collaborate easily with one another is no simple task for the IT team.

Freshfields was implementing a number of new applications and had performance issues due to WAN latency, resulting in poor user productivity.

By installing 32 Steelhead appliances worldwide at Freshfields' offices, document downloads were improved and bandwidth capacity increased by 400% which deferred future WAN upgrades. The Steelhead appliances will also enable consolidation of the IT infrastructure to centralize and simplify IT management.