

Childers Architect



U.S. Architectural firm accelerates productivity to keep the designs flowing.

Childers Architect has been creating meaningful and memorable spaces for Native American communities for over 25 years. Headquartered in Fort Smith, Arkansas, the design studio has many

landmark spaces and buildings to its name, such as The Cherokee Nation Outpatient Health Center, the nation’s largest Joint Venture Native American Healthcare facility. What makes the firm’s work remarkable is the passion and care architects put into crafting emotions and well-being, not just spaces.

75% data compression rate

In Brief

Challenges

Shift to remote work impacted the firm’s productivity, limiting employee access to business-critical applications and complicating collaboration over slow VPN connections. Low bandwidth and high latency from various ISPs as employees worked from home posed additional network challenges to overcome.

Solution

Proof of concept was presented by Collaboration Systems Group (CSG), a Riverbed partner. Riverbed Client Accelerator and Virtual SteelHead at the data center were deployed to provide more reliable and faster remote access.

Benefits

- On average, 1.5 days saved per employee per week
- On average, 75% data compression rate
- Efficiency and productivity maintained while working remotely

The challenge for remote design

When Childers Architect shifted to a remote workforce, it massively impacted the company's productivity, due to slow VPN connections for remotely-based users. As part of their daily work, each end user had multiple software programs and applications open, like 3D design and modeling alongside PDF editors, offline and cloud-hosted Microsoft Office documents, and audio and video conferencing. "It was very frustrating to access and share any file over the internet for the team, especially at the start of the pandemic," explains Phillip Bell, MIS Manager at Childers Architect. Keeping operations running smoothly became a challenge; the

design firm needed to ensure that employees spread across the U.S. remained connected and productive.

Childers also found it difficult to support end users remotely. The company's IT support was limited by available bandwidth and network latency. Most end users were working remotely from home with multiple connected devices, all sharing the same available bandwidth as the VPN connection. Connection speeds were reminiscent of early Bulletin Board System connections with 1200 baud POTS modem connection speeds—almost unbearable.

Proving the value of Riverbed Client Accelerator

Childers Architect previously used Riverbed® Acceleration™ solutions to accelerate the network and applications as employees worked in the office. "The Riverbed technology and implementation on our networks piqued my interest," recalls Bell. "As the global pandemic began, I foresaw a requirement to shift to remote work." Collaboration Systems Group (CSG), a Riverbed partner, helped transition Childers from the current in-place hardware solution to a virtual solution, utilizing newly created virtual machines to run the Riverbed appliances. During the transition, the CSG team used the opportunity to introduce Riverbed Client Accelerator, software designed to increase network and application acceleration for remote users regardless of location. Riverbed technology allowed each user to get a consistent, reliable, and secure digital experience on any device supported, and over any supported networks.

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Philip Bell,
MIS Manager, Childers Architect

"I was skeptical at first. I didn't quite believe that the Riverbed solution could bring in the throughput, performance, and speed needed to usher us into the 'remote' age. So CSG prepared a Proof of Concept (POC) on Client Accelerator," explains Bell. "We started the mobile client software freshly installed on my system. A 100 MB file was copied in roughly 4 minutes over our network. Then I was asked by CSG to delete the file and re-copy the same file again. What happened this time blew my mind. The file appeared almost instantly. The data was being optimized at a substantial rate of speed and thoroughness, a rate I thought impossible until it was fully demonstrated in front of my eyes. The process was repeated for a 1.5 gigabyte file. From a 12 minute initial copy, it went down to 20 seconds."

The successful POC, a substantiation of the system, and CSG's ability to integrate the technology were the deciding factors in Childers Architect decision. It began moving away from a hardware-based platform to the complete software-based solution from Riverbed.

Fast and secure access to applications

With Riverbed Client Accelerator on employee devices, Childers Architect end users had the ability to work across the U.S. without the bandwidth bottleneck typically seen in standard internet connections. The firm had substantially quicker access to their secure and non-secure applications, across varied and diverse networks.

The Riverbed solution was integrated with key software used by architects and designers, such as Revit, 3DMax, AutoCAD, and Clearview InFocus, to provide enhanced software and application-connected performance. It resulted in an exceptional digital experience for the team even as they worked outside the office.

Company-wide time savings with data compression

Architects, designers, and the production team at Childers Architect are now able to quickly access and move significantly-sized files. These run the gamut of full 3D design files, photo-realistic visualizations, drawings of building structural, mechanical, and electrical subsystems, project site and civil-related documentation, 2D and 3D building metadata linked to design files, to 2D draft annotation information.

“We are talking gigabytes of data in Autodesk® AutoCAD and Revit files and the PDFs generated during the design process,” Bell explains. “Faster file access saves 1.5 days per week, per employee. Company-wide, the time savings are huge. Additionally, due to an average of 75% data reduction rate, we have mitigated the negative effects of network and internet latency.”

Childers’ servers are now optimizing the data through the Riverbed implementation on all software and applications currently accessed by the team. “Anything that has static data or programming benefits from the technology,” sums up Bell. Childers Architect is also utilizing the Riverbed SaaS Accelerator for Microsoft 365 optimization, speeding up access to email, Teams collaboration, group calendars, and SharePoint.

A license-based service from CSG for SaaS Accelerator makes the Riverbed technology affordable for small and mid-sized businesses. “For us, just the optimization of email traffic and SharePoint data connections alone are worth the cost of the service. The rest is purely an added benefit. The re-captured bandwidth equates to saved time, which in the end equates to a better product and more profitability for the firm,” Bell affirms.



Business continuity during difficult times

“Had it not been for Riverbed and CSG, we would not have been able to work remotely so efficiently when the global pandemic started,” confesses Bell. “Riverbed, their software solution, and CSG’s implementation, enabled us to share large files with remote end users over varying amounts of bandwidth.”

With Riverbed Client Accelerator, Virtual SteelHead, and Riverbed SaaS Accelerator, Childers Architect has become efficient and productive in a work from anywhere environment. Today, the architectural firm can ensure employees remain highly productive, whether they are working on-site, assisting in field work, or working from their home. Instead of spending time waiting for bandwidth to become available, employees at Childers Architect are able to better focus

on client needs and design detail-oriented building solutions. Architects, designers, and the production team are able to focus on making remarkable interior and exterior designs come to life. They are bringing perceived thought to reality at Riverbed speed.

“Riverbed has created amazing, technologically advanced software. CSG has given the non-corporate individuals and businesses the ability to implement the Riverbed solution. I highly recommend the Riverbed products, either hardware- or software-based, to every individual or company looking to enhance the performance of their digital services. Hands down the best of the best!” enthuses Bell.

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Philip Bell, MIS Manager, Childers Architect



Riverbed – Empower the Experience

Riverbed is the only company with the collective richness of telemetry from network to app to end user that illuminates and then accelerates every interaction so that users get the flawless digital experience they expect across the entire digital ecosystem. Riverbed offers two industry-leading solution areas – Alluvio by Riverbed, an innovative and differentiated Unified Observability portfolio that unifies data, insights, and actions across IT, so customers can deliver seamless digital experiences; and Riverbed Acceleration, providing fast, agile, secure acceleration of any app over any network to users, whether mobile, remote, or on-prem. Together with our thousands of partners, and market-leading customers across the world, we empower every click, every digital experience. Learn more at riverbed.com.