

Case Study

IT Shared Services Provider Keeps the Post on Track

Background

This customer is the IT managed services provider for a national postal group of companies that includes the nation's postal service and major couriers. The organization provides client-specific Information Technology (IT), Information System (IS), and business solution services exclusively to all groups and functions within the national postal group on a cost-recovery basis.

Business issue

IT systems are becoming more complex. When network managers who troubleshoot issues do not have the visibility they need, business can come to a grinding halt and customers do not receive the best quality of service they deserve, including on-time delivery of their packages. The postal group's fleet of trucks was experiencing ongoing issues with truck reporting such as location and logistics. Data was coming from disparate locations either inconsistently or not at all.

The IT services provider needed network visibility in order to triage and troubleshoot the issues, but lacked concrete data such as deliveries, non-deliveries, and truck locations from the onboard computer systems on the trucks. IT operations needed to sync-up applications with the Central Office (CO) to see when the deliveries were made and which deliveries they were, see how long the trucks were out in the field, see when deliveries failed, and also have access to the real-time tracking system.

But, the onboard systems continued to time-out or could not connect at all, so data was lost or was unable to sync with the Head Office. The problems were recurring.

Regardless of the application, the IT services provider needed to determine the problem without having to recreate the issue, or worse, simply wait for the problem to happen again. For example, if an ERP was down, the IT operations team had to stop the application, deploy capture devices and wait for the issue to happen again in order to pinpoint the cause and solve the problem the next time.

The negative business impact of continually stopping an application could not be overstated.

Of course, to resolve this, the provider looked to lightweight, unified NAPM solutions that fit their hybrid cloud architecture, and also had capabilities to handle East-West traffic monitoring.

East-West monitoring provides insight into the transfer of data packets from server to server network traffic within a data center or the public cloud. Other, competitive solutions on the market meant they needed additional appliances to get full visibility as conventional East-West solutions required multiple packet broker ports retrofit with 10G interfaces.

This requirement meant deploying multiple appliances in multiple locations. The cost was highly prohibitive.

With the mission-critical need to keep costs low while still being able to see every application transaction that traversed their network, the organization turned to Accedian's Skylight™.

Solution benefits

With a strong sense of urgency to deliver the visibility quickly, Accedian was able to demonstrate that Skylight could take a highly granular approach to gain deep insights into the East-West traffic in a virtual machine (VM) cluster and pinpoint the root cause in less than fifteen minutes. Clearly, a key benefit here is Mean Time to Resolution (MTTR).

Accedian delivers East-West traffic monitoring through the use of lightweight, agentless, software capture points. Deployed in a VM hypervisor, the capture points listen to the East-West traffic on the virtual switch and forward a thin stream of metadata to a data store at each of the organization's data centers.

Skylight demonstrated its leading capabilities through:

1. Greatly shortened resolution times for mail delivery reporting and mail truck issues
2. Rapidly identified the origin of the problems clearly and succinctly
3. Delivered the ability to troubleshoot network issues easily and remotely
4. Offered real-time transaction analysis capabilities
5. Low total cost of ownership (TCO):
 - Low CAPEX for system implementation
 - Low OPEX for ongoing maintenance and operation
6. Helped with capacity planning

Business value and ROI

The solution was ideal for the organization's cost-sensitive environment. It did not require any changes to the physical hypervisors, saving significant costs, and was also highly scalable with very little impact on IT resources. Implementation was extremely quick. The proof of concept took 15-30 minutes in total, and the deployment of the full system took only three days. Ultimately, Accedian Skylight delivered:

- An easy-to-use, streamlined solution that quickly identified the root cause of any degradations or slowdowns
- Real-time visibility driving shorter resolution times
- Real-time transaction analysis for improving customer-facing activities, such as the delivery of packages

About Accedian

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