Hitachi Consulting

Organization

Hitachi Consulting

www.hitachiconsulting.com

Industry

IT Consulting

Challenge

With two data centers serving 24 offices in the U.S., Europe and India, Hitachi Consulting required a solution that could provide visibility into the applications running on the network while selectively accelerating business-critical ones.

Highlights/Benefit

› Hitachi Consulting deployed the integrated PacketShaper and ProxySG solution to intelligently accelerate and control business and recreational applications while maintaining visibility into their performance and end user experience.

Hitachi Consulting Sees Its Way to Application Control with Blue Coat

Integration between PacketShaper and ProxySG Appliances Allows Hitachi Consulting to Accelerate Applications without Compromising Visibility

Hitachi Consulting

Hitachi Consulting is the global business and IT consulting company of Hitachi Ltd with operations in the United States, Europe and Asia. With a client base that includes 25 percent of the Global 100 as well as many leading mid-market companies, Hitachi Consulting knows that success depends on how efficiently it can serve its global customer base. For Michael Shisko, director of IT at Hitachi Consulting, that means making the network infrastructure work efficiently and effectively for business applications, regardless of employee location.

Shisko believes that an efficient network infrastructure requires a deep understanding of the applications running on it and the ability to control those applications through a variety of mechanisms to optimize, manage or mitigate performance. To gain that visibility and control, Hitachi Consulting turned to Blue Coat PacketShaper and ProxySG appliances.

Global Acquisitions Create Demand for Acceleration

Since its inception, Hitachi Consulting has centralized applications, files and data in its Dallas data center to serve employees in all locations. To simplify serviceability in its branch offices, servers were limited, and a consistent network infrastructure was deployed across all offices to access centralized resources.

Over the years, Hitachi Consulting acquired companies and consolidated the associated applications and data in the Dallas data center. Employees that had been accustomed to local application access were now accessing applications remotely and noticed the resulting slower application response times.

In the fall of 2006, the acquisitions started to catch up with Hitachi Consulting. With data centers in Dallas and London serving 17 offices in the U.S. and seven in Europe and India, Hitachi Consulting was supporting more than 1,500 employees. The resulting slowdown in application response times was just part of the problem. Network links were operating at full capacity. Without the tools to see or understand the applications running on the network, Hitachi Consulting couldn't determine if it required additional bandwidth or if policy changes could mitigate bandwidth utilization. Looking for answers, Hitachi Consulting turned to Blue Coat PacketShaper appliances.

Visibility Enables Intelligent Action

Hitachi Consulting deployed Blue Coat PacketShaper appliances in all its U.S. offices, as well as in London, Lisbon and Madrid, with plans to deploy additional appliances in recently acquired offices across Europe. With the ability to identify more than 600 applications, PacketShaper appliances provided Hitachi Consulting with a full understanding of the traffic running on the network and the ability to monitor the performance and user experience of those applications. Certain applications were still slow, but now Hitachi Consulting knew why and could take steps to resolve performance challenges.

"We knew that visibility was more important to managing our network than raw acceleration," said Shisko. "It is more important for us to see the traffic and then be able to intelligently handle it than to simply accelerate everything without understanding what we are speeding up."

No Compromise Approach to Acceleration

After taking steps to manage bandwidth usage and prioritize critical applications and armed with an understanding of why certain applications were running slowly, Hitachi Consulting set about to fix it. After an evaluation of WAN optimization platforms, Hitachi Consulting deployed Blue Coat ProxySG appliances to accelerate the delivery of applications and files across its WAN.

Key to the selection was the unique ability of ProxySG appliances to provide PacketShaper appliances with visibility into optimized traffic. With other WAN optimization solutions, Hitachi Consulting lost the visibility and control from PacketShaper appliances that were crucial to effectively managing the network. The integration between ProxySG and PacketShaper appliances ensured that Hitachi Consulting could still discover, classify and prioritize optimized traffic.

"Since visibility is so critical to how we run the network, we needed a WAN optimization solution that could work within that context and enable us to see optimized traffic as individual applications rather than a single block of traffic," Shisko continued. "With the Blue Coat solution, we didn't have to compromise visibility for acceleration or vice versa. We can accelerate the traffic that we want to accelerate while still providing visibility into it."

Visibility and Control Pave Way for New Services

The combination of the Blue Coat PacketShaper and ProxySG appliances have enabled Hitachi Consulting to deliver high quality real-time services, such as voice over IP (VoIP) and, more recently, streaming video.

Blue Coat PacketShaper appliances provide visibility and control, allowing Hitachi Consulting to prioritize applications, apply QoS at the application level and assign guaranteed bandwidth levels. This granular control enabled Hitachi Consulting to support voice over IP (VoIP) across the distributed organization.

With integrated video management technology that allows for stream splitting of live video feeds, content pre-population and caching of on-demand video, ProxySG appliances enable Hitachi Consulting to effectively communicate with its employees via video.

While the company was increasingly interested in utilizing live video, it could not support all 1,500 employees watching a video stream at the same time. The Blue Coat stream-splitting technology splits a single stream at a branch office into many streams that can be viewed by employees within a single location. By reducing the number of streams that need to be sent to each location, the Blue Coat ProxySG appliances dramatically reduce WAN bandwidth consumption and enable all employees to watch videocasts at their desks.

Reducing Access Time through Optimization

Prior to the deployment of Blue Coat appliances, file and application access times reached 200 milliseconds over the transatlantic link. With Blue Coat ProxySG appliances, that latency declined dramatically. ProxySG appliances utilize a combination of optimization technologies, including protocol optimization, object and byte caching and compression, to maximize bandwidth capacity and reduce access times.

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>
> **- Mike Shisko**

"In our initial deployment, we have seen access to our Web-based and accounting applications as well as our file shares improve to near LAN-like speeds," said Shisko, director of IT. "Over time, we expect to see that performance improve even more as a result of the caching capabilities of the ProxySG solution."

Additionally, Hitachi Consulting was moving its European offices from a site-to-site VPN to an MPLS-based network for its WAN links. With PacketShaper appliances, the company can prioritize outbound traffic, tagging it appropriately to ensure it is handled correctly across the Internet cloud.

Partnering for Success

To deploy the Blue Coat ProxySG appliances, Hitachi Consulting turned to Florance and Associates Consulting, a Blue Coat Channel Advantage Premier partner. Florance joined the Blue Coat Channel Advantage Program through the Packeteer acquisition, and as a result of the acquisition, Florance has expanded its portfolio of offerings to include both Blue Coat PacketShaper and ProxySG appliances.

"Blue Coat offers the most comprehensive collection of WAN optimization technologies on the market," said Henry Draughon, business development manager at Florance. "For end users like Hitachi Consulting that require in-depth visibility and a way to act on that visibility, the Blue Coat combination of PacketShaper and ProxySG appliances is the best solution."

For Florance, being able to provide that personal service is core to its business.

"If we take care of our customers, act as consultants and look after their interests, we build a strong relationship," said Rick Florance, proprietor at Florance and Associates Consultants. "We work with our customers to understand their business goals and guide them to the technologies that will best serve them."

For Hitachi Consulting, that personal relationship is critical.

"Florance and Associates has a deep understanding of PacketShaper and provides personal service and support that we have come to trust," said Shisko. "That level of support and attention has made working with Florance a real pleasure."

A Network to the Future

With the Blue Coat ProxySG and PacketShaper appliances, Hitachi Consulting has gained the visibility and granular control it requires to ensure the performance of existing applications and introduce new ones, such as video. As it continues to integrate recent acquisitions, Hitachi Consulting has the infrastructure in place to support that transition.

With Blue Coat and Florance Associates Consulting, Hitachi Consulting has built a foundation upon which it can grow.