



LEADING LAW FIRM PROTECTS CLIENT INFORMATION THROUGH SERVER CENTRALIZATION AND SECURE DATA REPLICATION

BACKGROUND

The “Law Firm” is one of the nation’s leading legal practices, with a team of 700 attorneys and 1,300 employees serving clients through offices in Boston, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. Clients include over one-third of the Fortune 100 companies, over 120 S&P 500 companies and over 80 New York Stock Exchange companies, as well as over 500 technology-based companies and over 100 venture capital companies.

“Our goal is to turn local computer rooms into computer closets by consolidating key application servers and storage into regional hubs.”— NETWORK SERVICES MANAGER

The Law Firm’s offices are connected via redundant MPLS links that range in speed from 50 Mbps to 155 Mbps. The firm averages up to 5 GB of data per day across each WAN link, leveraging a variety of applications, including MS Exchange email, Microsoft file services (CIFS), FTP, web, Interwoven (iManage) for document management, LexisNexis InterAction for contact management and CRM functions, and Aderant’s CMS.Net for time and billing management (using SQL).

The Law Firm began a strategic initiative in 2006 to centralize all critical applications within two dedicated regional facilities, located in the suburbs of Boston and San Jose, California. The goal of this project is to reduce infrastructure costs, ensure data privacy, and facilitate day-to-day IT operations. In addition, by performing data replication between these sites, the Law Firm can ensure that client information is always available and protected against unexpected disaster.

“Our goal is to turn local computer rooms into computer closets by consolidating key application servers and storage into regional hubs,” said the Network Services Manager for the Law Firm. “To achieve this, we needed to overcome the limitations that traditionally hamper WAN performance. This makes WAN acceleration a ‘must have’ in our IT environment.”

THE DISCOVERY PHASE

The Law Firm first started looking at WAN optimization products two years ago to address specific pain points in their network. In particular, the firm’s litigation staff in New York was unable to copy large CDs to centralized servers in Boston.

“We were underwhelmed by the results achieved with traditional compression and QoS products,” admitted the Network Services Manager. “Back then, we felt that WAN optimization was too immature to solve our application delivery challenges.”

LAW FIRM CHALLENGES

- » Headquartered in Boston with offices in L.A., N.Y., S.F., and Washington D.C
- » Sites connected via redundant MPLS links (50 Mbps – 155 Mbps WAN capacity)
- » Dedicated co-locations for centralized application delivery and disaster recovery
- » Over 5 GB of data sent across individual WAN links daily; 80–90 ms of latency on cross country WAN links
- » File, email, web, document management, CRM, and financial applications all suffering from poor performance across WAN

SILVER PEAK’S RESULTS

- » 10–20x average improvement for file, email, and collaboration tools
- » 21x improvement for data replication across WAN
- » Latency-sensitive financial application delivered with LAN-like performance
- » Over 80% data reduction on average
- » 93% peak data reduction — 7 GB reduced to < 500 MB





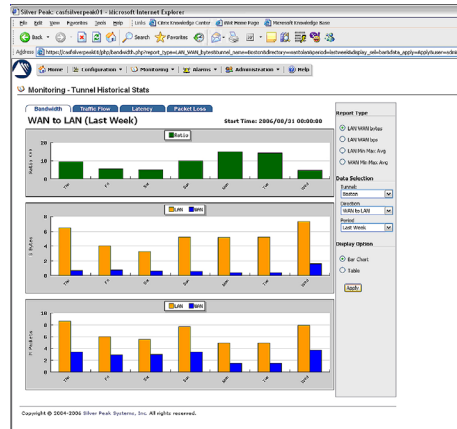
Rather than deploy a dedicated WAN optimization product, the Law Firm chose to add more bandwidth to their Boston/New York link. While costly to implement, this provided short-term benefit on this troubled link.

The Law Firm's WAN problems resurfaced when they opened new offices in San Francisco and Los Angeles. The company routinely saw 80–90 milliseconds of latency when communicating between the East and West coasts, causing users to waste tens of minutes each time they downloaded necessary information from across the country.

"No matter what we did, we could not seem to get more than 6 Mbps of throughput on our 50 Mbps cross-country WAN links," stated the Network Services Manager. "All the bandwidth in the world could not address our latency problems. We found ourselves reevaluating WAN acceleration technologies, hoping that the market had evolved since our prior experience."

A CLEAR VERDICT

The Law Firm chose to evaluate several products from a variety of vendors, including Riverbed, Silver Peak, Orbital (now Citrix), and Packeteer. They decided to perform numerous cross-country tests using 45-Mbps WAN links. Special emphasis was placed on Microsoft file transfers and browsing (using CIFS), data replication, and the effect that WAN acceleration has on the firm's CMS. Net billing application, which is particularly sensitive to latency due to real-time SQL transactions.



Silver Peak consistency delivered 10-20x improvement across several applications, with 93% data reduction in some instances.

"Out of the gate, Silver Peak and Riverbed were head and shoulders above the rest in terms of performance," said the Network Services Manager. "These products showed nice data reduction on the WAN and made a noticeable improvement to the end-user experience. In the end, Silver Peak demonstrated better gains across more applications. In addition, Silver Peak was the only vendor to provide disk encryption on their WAN acceleration appliances, giving us peace of mind that our client information would remain secure on these appliances."

Silver Peak's NX Appliances showed 10–20x average improvement across several different applications, including Microsoft File (CIFS), email, and FTP. In addition, data replication saw a 21x improvement across the WAN. With Silver Peak, the firm routinely saw over 80% data reduction on the WAN. In one instance, this peaked to 93%, as 7 GB of traffic was reduced to approximately 500 MB over the course of a single day.

The Law Firm was particularly pleased with the performance of their CMS. Net application across the Silver Peak-enabled WAN. While some vendors were forced to bypass this SQL traffic due to its unique latency requirements, Silver Peak showed noticeable improvement.

"While difficult to quantify, the differences in our SQL applications were like night and day," professed the Network Services Manager. "Even though the server was located in Massachusetts, users in California felt more like they were accessing the application locally. We were pleasantly surprised to see some of the firm's toughest IT critics extremely vocal in their praise."

MAKING THE CASE

Silver Peak broke down the WAN barriers that hamper application performance across the Law Firm's WAN. This enabled the firm to move ahead with its centralization plans and strategic disaster recovery initiatives, saving time and money while protecting what matters most — their client's information.

"No additional business case was needed to justify the investment in WAN acceleration," exclaimed the Network Services Manager. "After an exhaustive trial, we had all the evidence we needed to make an informed and accurate product decision."

The verdict is in. When it comes to secure, scalable WAN acceleration, Silver Peak is the clear decision.