

CASE STUDY

XACTWARE

CUSTOMER SNAPSHOT

Provider of software for the construction and building repair industry

Industry:

Construction Technology

Location:

United States

Solutions:

Solera Networks DS Appliance

Results:

- Able to collect and store all network traffic
- Can easily analyze any segment of network data
- Quick resolution of network performance issues
- Consolidation of network analysis applications



With the Solera DS Appliance in place Xactware is able to quickly resolve any network event.



Determining the cause of slow connectivity and answering the question, “What happened to my network?,” is no longer a problem for Xactware. With the ability to record and playback all network traffic using a solution from Solera Networks, they quickly identify the root cause of the problem and restore network peace.

OVERVIEW

Xactware[™], Inc. provides computer software solutions for professionals involved in estimating all phases of building construction and repair. Founded in 1986, Xactware launched its first estimating system, called Xactimate, which helped contractors and insurance adjusters estimate repairs much faster and more accurately than ever before.

Today, Xactimate is the number one estimating solution for the insurance repair industry. It is used by 80% of American restoration contractors and 8 of the top 10 property insurers to determine the cost of repairs.

CHALLENGE

Xactware’s success rests in part in the investments the company makes in research and development and in the quality of people who develop their products. Their goal is to design and develop software that is so sophisticated, it’s simple. And, as an application service provider for hundreds of thousands of contracting professionals, Xactware must constantly monitor their network environments for performance issues and insuring the security of their platform.

Simplicity is also the goal of the company’s network operations. The IT team at Xactware manages a sophisticated 10/100/1000 Mbps network of application servers and a number of T1s and virtual private networks (VPNs) for numerous business partners. Maintaining 100% uptime to the Web and data applications for their business partners is of paramount importance. Because Xactware’s products help estimate the cost of building repairs and insurance claims, it is critical that the company’s business partners have 24x7 access to the necessary information via the company’s Web interface. In the case of a natural disaster or other catastrophic event, access to the company’s current estimating data is vital.

Determining the cause of connectivity issues was problematic for Xactware. “Most of our customers report issues with connectivity after they have performed their own troubleshooting,” explains Todd Bagley, Team Leader of Xactware’s Communications Team. “By the time we were alerted to an issue, we really had no way of viewing what happened. We have device monitoring in place and receive alerts when a device causes a network failure, but determining the cause of ‘slow connection’ complaints was nearly impossible.”

In the event of a network failure, the detailed data required to answer questions about what happened and at what time it happened was not available and Xactware was left without answers.

SOLUTION

To solve this problem, the company realized they needed to capture all of the network traffic and have the ability to play back any portion of it. Without full capture capabilities, they would be left with only snapshots of their network traffic. With only small slices of network traffic data, the problem may go undetected. Thus, a full network traffic archive was a must.

Xactware found their answer in Solera Networks and the DS Series 3000 capture appliance. Using the Solera DS 3000, a 3U appliance equipped with 6.4 TB of storage and capture rates up to 6.4 Gbps, Xactware is able to collect and store a complete record of all network traffic. With this, they can provide detailed answers about network traffic at any given point in time, and perform "TimeShift™" analysis of traffic flows.

RESULT

The result: greatly improved data for identifying the root cause and timeframe of a network failure, as well as a reduction in both cost and administrative time, according to Bagley. "The Solera DS 3000 helps my team answer the question, 'Why did my customer lose his connection last night?' or provide backing information for the dreaded, 'The network is down!'", states Bagley. "When a customer's connection is down, we can now show them what traffic is or isn't flowing over the questioned segment. Because of the data stored on the DS 3000, we can evaluate a specific timeframe of network traffic, can pinpoint the problem and know why the customer could not access an application."

The DS 3000 also provided Xactware with a platform for consolidation of the company's network analysis (ntop.org) and intrusion detection system (IDS) application servers. "We started collecting network traffic on our DS 3000 and, instead of having to track multiple switch mirrors, we moved NTOP and IDS to the DS 3000 server. It works great," explains Bagley. This further simplified the company's network security operations, and increased their ROI of the Solera Networks solution.

Protecting against the threat of downtime and intrusions is critical for a company which finds itself in the center of insurance claims and reconstruction estimates when disaster strikes. As Todd Bagley states, "The speed with which we respond to events now will more than pay for the cost of this device."



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Todd Bagley
Team Leader
Communication Team
Xactware

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CONTACT US

Contact Solera Networks to give your network a memory. For more information, visit us online at www.soleranetworks.com or call us at 1-877-5SOLERA.

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