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Craig Donald
IT Director, EMEA
VERITAS

Summary

For VERITAS Software, a high-availability IP network is crucial. Customers transfer massive files over the network and don't want to be put in a position where – in the event of downtime – they have to restart large uploads. The success of live demonstrations of its software products also depends on fault-free functionality. Craig Donald, IT Director, EMEA, VERITAS explains: “Because we are a software company, we develop, test and support all of our products on this network. We rely on this network to tackle customer problems. If we had downtime and were unable to connect to our resources, we would be unable to resolve the problems of some of our high-visibility customers.”

So, a reliable Local Area Network linking its Reading, UK, campus buildings was key, as was a resilient Wide Area Network (WAN). The WAN would connect its 23 sites across EMEA – including offices in Paris, Munich, Johannesburg, Stockholm, Zurich and Dubai – to the Reading hub.

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High-availability network helps VERITAS Software sustain revenue growth

Delivering 99.995% uptime and easy scalability, VERITAS Software's new network infrastructure for Europe, the Middle East and Africa is fundamental to the development, testing, demonstration and support of its products.

Background

Building a \$5bn software company

VERITAS Software has a major ambition – to be the next \$5bn independent software company. To date, only Microsoft, Oracle and SAP have managed to generate that much revenue in a year. And the task has been made even more challenging by the current global downturn.

Nevertheless, despite the general economic outlook, VERITAS has continued to grow. In 2001, the company increased its revenues by 24%, and by 1% in 2002, while most other technology companies suffered revenue falls. To help sustain this growth trend, VERITAS is targeting markets in Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA).

Challenge

Centralising its EMEA operations...

To compete most effectively in these markets, VERITAS has had to address its infrastructure problem – a legacy of rapid and unstructured growth that had left it with decentralised and archaic back-office systems.

First the company needed to centralise the running of its EMEA operation. To this end, it acquired new buildings on the GreenPark development in Reading, UK. This campus would act as the hub for its EMEA business.

Solution

The next step was the implementation of a robust infrastructure that would support its staff, products and customers. As a leading provider of storage management software for data protection, application availability and disaster recovery, VERITAS's infrastructure – and specifically its Internetworking Protocol (IP) infrastructure – is crucial.

... and implementing a reliable network infrastructure

Because it develops, tests and supports products on its IP network, the company demands high availability. So, a reliable Local Area Network (LAN) linking the campus buildings was key, as was a resilient Wide Area Network (WAN). The WAN would connect its 23 sites across EMEA – including offices in Paris, Munich, Johannesburg, Stockholm, Zurich and Dubai – to the GreenPark campus.

The hub site would also provide transatlantic connectivity to California and Florida from EMEA, so that its 850+ EMEA employees could access its global Enterprise and Resource Planning, Support and Sales databases. In addition, the pending acquisition of Precise Software means VERITAS will potentially be adding a number of office locations into its EMEA WAN, including a development site in Israel. The ability to scale the network upwards easily was therefore one of the primary drivers.

Equally important was finding a partner that could deliver on all of VERITAS's needs. And, after BT hosted a business agility workshop for VERITAS in November 2001, it was selected as the strategic partner that would design and implement the new IP network infrastructure at VERITAS's EMEA headquarters in the UK. There were compelling reasons behind BT's selection.

Results

Network availability up from 99.9% to 99.995%

BT's new infrastructure is an enhancement on the IP network VERITAS already had in place. It has enabled the company to move from 99.9% network availability to 99.995% availability. Though an increase of 0.095% may seem small, it is very significant because:

Customers transfer massive files over the network

VERITAS's customers use the EMEA WAN to transfer massive files – frequently 1gb or larger – to VERITAS's support representatives for analysis or troubleshooting.

With files of this size, high performance and availability are crucial. VERITAS does not want to put its customers in a position where they have to restart large uploads if the network goes down, or to leave uploads running for hours or days at a time because of poor performance.

Explains Craig Donald, IT Director, EMEA, VERITAS: "Because we are a software company, we develop, test and support all of our products on this network. We rely on this network to tackle customer problems. If we had downtime and were unable to connect to our resources, we would be unable to resolve the problems of some of our high-visibility customers."

Demonstrations depend on high availability

A feature of the new EMEA campus is a three-room customer demonstration centre, where potential customers can view live demonstrations of VERITAS software. The high availability of its new IP network is critical to the success of the demonstrations, and therefore to VERITAS's ability to win new business.

Thorough advance testing saves millions

With any new infrastructure, thorough advance testing is necessary to prevent unforeseen problems emerging post-implementation that could result in costly downtime. And with Veritas, fault-free functionality is mission-critical.

So, before the campus infrastructure went live in September 2002, BT staged all of the hardware in a test environment. During the testing phase, a number of serious hardware faults were identified and resolved without any impact on the timescales of the implementation.

These faults could have caused major problems if they hadn't been discovered beforehand. Had the implementation gone ahead without the comprehensive advance testing, VERITAS would have suffered at least a couple of days' delay. "This could potentially have cost the company tens of millions of pounds," says Craig Donald.

Seamless transition to EMEA hub

Migrating an entire organisation to new premises is a highly risky project at the best of times, and needs to be carried out without interruption of services to existing customers. BT helped VERITAS to transfer the networking facilities of its key personnel to the EMEA hub without incident.

Transparency was integral to ensuring the success of the move. "Because BT was very open to making sure that we knew exactly what was going on, by the time the network was handed over to us, we were more than comfortable in supporting it," says Craig Donald.

Scalable infrastructure supports growth

The network was designed to provide resilience, bandwidth and diverse routing. BT conceived the infrastructure as a series of building blocks that would allow the customer to add to or re-arrange the network, while still keeping the overall concept intact.

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“We now have a very robust, expandable and dynamic operating environment – a foundation for quicker and easier growth,” says Craig Donald.

Innovative network design impresses US office

BT’s proposed network configuration differed to the approach taken by Craig Donald’s network colleagues in the US and, as a result, VERITAS’s EMEA operation had to justify the revised network map to its US office. The successful implementation of the network, its high availability and scalability did all the explaining that was needed. The US office was impressed by the innovation.

“It was a great win for us,” says Craig Donald. “BT has delivered on all of the objectives we set out at the beginning of the project, the most important of which was the high availability of the network.”

IP network fundamental to VERITAS’s EMEA operation

VERITAS’s IP network now completely supports its EMEA business operation. The 99.995% availability allows VERITAS to develop, test and support its software products on the network virtually without fear of downtime – essential for a company offering uptime to high-profile clients. And customers can use the network to rapidly and reliably upload massive files for analysis and troubleshooting by support representatives.

Future acquisitions have been factored in, as the IP network is easily scalable. But, more than just catering for future growth, the network is also fundamental to VERITAS winning new business – successful demonstrations at its customer demonstration centre depend on a reliable network.

Technical information

Robust network infrastructure supports move to EMEA hub

BT worked with Syntegra – the consulting and systems integration business – to install a robust and scalable Internet Protocol (IP) network infrastructure at VERITAS’s new EMEA headquarters. Relocation to the UK campus was dependent upon the successful implementation of this infrastructure.

The IP network was designed to utilise a layer 3 core and distribution, with a layer 2 access. Two Virtual Local Area Networks (VLANs) were configured within each access switch to help provide resilience, bandwidth and diverse routing for the users.

The network configuration allows extra bandwidth to be added quickly, without requiring upgrades to installed equipment. If more users are required, the other access layer switch can be added to the existing distribution layer. If another building is required, a distribution and access for the new site can be added to the existing core.

A Wide Area Network (WAN) links VERITAS’s 23 EMEA sites to the UK hub.

BT has provided the following products and services to VERITAS:

- BT IT project management, design and consultancy
- Cisco LAN and WAN hardware platform
- BT Frame Relay
- Infrastructure design, configuration and implementation
- IManaged Bandwidth Services
- IDisaster recovery for its network infrastructure
- Consulting on VERITAS’s business requirements across EMEA

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