

CASE STUDY

UK Distillery Firm

Real-time Network Monitoring helps UK
Distillery plan for UX-Led Application Services

FluidOne

Case Study

Our client wanted to monitor applications delivered from the UK to a global workforce but could not get essential network intelligence or monitoring capabilities directly from its carrier. FluidOne designed a bespoke solution that provides real-time reporting and trending analysis for the company's large global network consisting of over 200 infrastructure devices.

Our client is a billion-pound global distillery company with a portfolio of blended and single malt whiskeys and established brands of vodka, gin, rum and tequila.

Requirements

- Experiential data for internal score cards
- An independent view of how the network is operating
- Data retention for trend analysis
- Speed and flexibility around change management
- Ability to monitor changes in the network
- A real-time view of network operations with visibility of device status
- End-of-life information for all devices
- Drill down capabilities on specific devices
- The ability to create bespoke reports

Challenges

Company needs to deliver UX-led approach to application performance across large global network

“When you’re running a large global operation from a centralised UK base, the network has to be functionally and operationally reliable, particularly if user experience is a key performance indicator for your role,” said IT project manager, James.

James is responsible for multiple IT projects across one of the world’s best-known distillers of blended and malt whiskeys.

“Our view is that it’s not relevant that the network is up 99.999% of the time if it takes a user 10 minutes to run a report that should take 10 seconds. The network is just a transport mechanism. We needed to get to a score card around end user experience; a way to resource the network and report against applications as a user experiences them,” said James.

In addition to carrying traditional corporate traffic, James also needed to ensure that the network could deliver a seamless user experience for telephony and video conferencing applications.

Existing monitoring and reporting capabilities were not supporting IT objectives

“We’ve been with our carrier for six or seven years,” said James.

“They provide a fully outsourced service to the edge switch port, but unfortunately they were struggling to deliver the level of monitoring and reporting we needed to manage the network and take it forward.”

James felt that the shortfall in real-time information and the lack of granularity over time was creating challenges for managing systems performance for the business.

“Without trending information it was difficult to predict our requirements and, therefore, the cost of things like CoS (Class of Service), which is essential for voice and video traffic,” said James. **“Not having clear visibility of when network equipment would be ‘end-of-life’ meant it was difficult to plan our replacement strategy.”**

“When you’re running a 24/7 operation, you need to know, in real-time, if devices on the WAN and LAN go down or service is degraded, so you can take action immediately to ensure that services are available,” said James. **“Usage stats can help to ensure you have the right technology in place to maintain service levels and to support any changes going forward – we didn’t have any of this information.”**

Solution

Carrier given ultimatum to deliver comprehensive intelligence solution

With data analysis playing such an important role in ensuring a positive user experience, James decided to make the availability of advanced reporting and monitoring capabilities a condition of re-signing with the carrier. That was when they introduced FluidOne.

“From the moment of engagement, FluidOne came across as competent and reliable. We could see that FluidOne was a forward thinking company that would be very easy for us to do business with,” said James.

The company started with FluidOne's reporting and monitoring tool, with a view to extending from the network to the server and application estates.

“A monitoring tool is a monitoring tool. What's important is the way FluidOne uses the tool and its flexibility to develop the tool to do what we want,” said James.

“The biggest thing is having a relationship with a company that is independent of our carrier and having the technical resource to use the tool to drive an independent view.”

FluidOne commissioned to provide real-time monitoring of all devices on client's estate

That was 15 months ago. Today FluidOne monitors over 200 devices for the company, including routers, wireless LAN controllers, APs, firewalls, switches, etc. It also provides a technical resource manager; an addition that James considers a useful asset.

“Having the services of a TRM (technical relationship manager) is helpful for building a reporting story for our internal scorecards; this is the information we publish to the business and we pretty much live or die by the results,” said James.

From a reporting and monitoring perspective, the FluidOne solution has given James a lot of information that's going to make it easier to do his job:

“We've now got unlimited ability to retain data for trend analysis; that helps us with planning and the allocation of resources, as well as homing in, and reporting, on specific support issues,” said James.

“Network performance analysis gives us a good picture of what's happening on a day-to-day basis and tells us which ports and devices are available; we get automated email alerts when devices go up and down.”

Solution

Previously James found it difficult to get changes made on the network because data was seldom available to support his requests but with FluidOne's tool, he's found that speed and flexibility around change management has greatly improved. The FluidOne tool also allows the company to monitor changes to the network itself.

The network was previously monitored by polling through the internet. **"We're now directly monitoring the network via an FluidOne node on the WAN. This is so much better than before, when we had a single point of failure and would lose polling data whenever the internet connection or Data Centre was unavailable"**, said James.

James particularly likes the FluidOne Advanced Reporting Module (ARM), which provides bespoke reports on the network and

infrastructure. ARM maintains data long-term without rolling it up into a summary, which gives the ability to drill down from reports into the underlying data, as well as the ability to see long-term trends.

A feature of the ARM that James has found really useful is the ability to get 'end-of-life' information across the entire estate. He commented, **"EOL data helps us, not only from an administration and cost perspective but also, by ensuring we're not exposed to potential security breaches as a result of having unsupported technology deployed on the network."**

Results

James believes new monitoring solution has contributed to a more functional and reliable network

“Gut feel says our network performs better because we’re taking positive action as a result of the information we’re receiving,” says James. **“It’s a process of iteration; the information we’re getting allows us to analyse and take action to make the network perform better and be more reliable.”**

FluidOne relationship reinforced with further brief to execute mobile solutions

Since his first engagement with FluidOne, James has also used the company for connectivity solutions, including mobile technology and wireless installations. So far these have only been in the UK but he anticipates there may be worldwide requirements in the future.

Commenting on what he likes best about FluidOne, James said, **“FluidOne is continually innovating. They are happy to take feedback from us, and have been willing to develop some of our suggestions where these might benefit their other customers too.”**

FluidOne

We design, deploy and manage the networks on which our customers run their businesses in an increasingly digital world. Our hybrid networks will help customers digitalise their businesses

The best price possible

Our hybrid networks, enhanced by SD-WAN, blend carriers and technologies to optimise the price of every site, and minimise installation cost with zero touch deployment. We offer transparent pricing for peace of mind.

The fastest deployment

Our hybrid networks let you choose circuits that deliver fastest for each site, and our 4G WAN circuits offer 2 day delivery with seamless transition to permanent circuits.

The easiest migration

We can phase your migrations to suit you, minimising cost and hassle.

The best performance and uptime

Our advanced monitoring shows the whole application path, raise 95% of key issues proactively and allows detailed reporting and drill-down to show issues and long-term trends.

The most enjoyable and pain free experience

Our end to end digital systems and processes deliver Right first time with clear, accurate bills.