NETSCOUT™

NetScout Helps Business Continuity Services Provider Meet Managed Hosting Requirements; Facilitates Disaster Recovery and Cloud Networking

Overview

Business Challenge

- Provide reliable, on-demand access to customer data as necessary
- Maximize the connectivity of existing infrastructure to perform more tests
- Minimize infrastructure costs

Solution

- ONPATH 2900 series and nGenius® 3900 series packet flow switch and Horizon™ Management Software

Business Results

- Reduced CAPEX by implementing a solution at a fraction of the cost
- Reduced OPEX by minimizing staff previously dedicated to cable moves
- Enabled shared access to network equipment for repeated test groups
- Support for any protocol, any speed

This major international firm provides business continuity and disaster recovery certification services to over 10,000 customers. With five million square feet of state-of-the-art data center and operations space, 70% of Fortune 100 companies, and those in the financial, manufacturing, retail, healthcare, transportation, telecom, utilities, and Government sectors rely on the firm's services to keep their mission-critical information and applications up and running under any circumstances.

Challenge

Industries such as healthcare, government, finance, and utilities can be subject to certain laws and regulations regarding both disaster recovery and business continuity. These regulations often require robust business continuity networks and routine certifications of their process.

The firm maintains huge amounts of network equipment – thousands of servers, switches, storage devices – that, at any given moment, specific customers may need to access. Although testing requirements and disaster recovery objectives may vary, the firm's need to provide their customers with fast, reliable, high-performance connectivity across whatever public or private cloud resources they require does not.

In both a test certification and live production scenario, the firm needs to establish dozens to hundreds of connections across various arrays of network devices. For both scenarios, the customer must achieve the application performance and response time that matches to the service levels they require and expect for the paid services. Creating the physical connections, then testing and troubleshooting them to get it correctly operational was time consuming.

TEST OPTIMIZATION

A test scenario could easily take days to set up and complete. These long test scenarios were reducing the firm's ability to utilize expensive equipment in their data centers optimally, reducing the number of customers and certifications they could perform. The firm needed a solution that would enable them to offer their customers highly reliable, on-demand connectivity, and the flexibility to support whatever speeds and protocols their environments required. The cloud services firm needed a cloud networking infrastructure that would be both flexible and scalable in order to accommodate all of their current, as well as their future needs.

Solution

The firm's trusted relationship with NetScout began over 15 years ago, when they purchased over 25,000 ports of a matrix switching solution from the early predecessor to ONPATH: Telenex Corporation. Today, however, their needs have grown from low-speed copper Mainframe and WAN connections to high-speed Fibre Channel and Ethernet networks, at speeds up to 10Gbit/sec.

After evaluating the industry alternatives, they confirmed that NetScout was still the most reliable and scalable solution on the market for all of their requirements.

NetScout's redundant, modular system design provides them with high availability for their customers' critical requirements. With an ONPATH 2920 chassis, the firm has up to 2,048 ports of connectivity available, with port speed flexibility ranging from less than 1Mbps to over 1 Gbps, and application flexibility from v.35 to 10GE per port. The addition of three fully loaded new 3903 systems delivers another 432 ports to be used for 10Gigabit Ethernet and 8 Gbit/s FICON (IBM Fiber Connectivity) applications. The ability of the platform to support higher port speeds to 100Gbps and beyond was a plus knowing they will keep increasing speeds over time, but was not a driving requirement to their near-term needs.

With Horizon Management Software, establishing network connections for both test certifications and live production networks is automated without the need for moving physical cables. Connections to network equipment are made once, and then access to that equipment is provided through Horizon's choice of user interfaces. Test sets can be established and repeated, and entire groups previously responsible for making ongoing physical cable changes can be reduced to just a few individuals, thus resulting in operational savings.

Business Results

With the implementation of NetScout's hardware and software solution, the firm was able to minimize their additional network and storage infrastructure costs by making all of their network resources more available whenever needed, in order to fulfill their customers' requirements. Operating expenses were also reduced through the use of an automated connectivity solution that could be configured by anyone authorized in the infrastructure team, from anywhere across their global facilities. Each customer's architecture can now be arranged and scheduled for specific times of test certification, or be implemented as an automatic disaster recovery scenario. And perhaps just as important – all of the automation happens without the connection errors inherent to a manual process.

The CAPEX to implement the NetScout solution was found to be a fraction of that of their conventional layer 2 switching solution, due to both the cost advantage of the equipment and the performance advantage of the physical layer connection. These savings align with the firm's objective to help their customers avoid unnecessary costs. The solution also helped achieve reliable and secure access to mission-critical information and applications at all times.

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