

Global Home Fashion Retailer Assures Performance of Buyer Applications and Distribution Services in Production & Disaster Recovery Data Centers

NETSCOUT Helps IT Effectively Monitor Network and Application Uptime For Mission-critical Retail Services

OVERVIEW

The Challenge

- Inability of IT to effectively monitor network uptime and assure delivery of critical voice and data applications and services
- Network congestion issues interfere with application performance both in production and back-up data centers
- If a buying office or distribution center goes offline, the cost to the business is millions of dollars every hour that it's down

Solution in Action

- InfiniStream® appliances and nGenius® Packet Flow Switches
- nGeniusONE® Service Assurance platform
- OptiView® XG handheld network analysis tablet

The Results

- Saved significant time and money by finding and fixing problems faster
- Minimized downtime in primary and back up data centers saving the business millions of dollars in revenue
- Improved IT team collaboration and productivity has reduced finger pointing



Customer Profile

This global retailer specializes in discount apparel and home fashion, offering customers a changing assortment of high-quality merchandise at discounted prices. With nearly four thousand stores spanning nine countries on three continents, generating in excess of \$30 billion in annual revenues this truly is a globally distributed business. To protect the business, this retailer maintains active backups sync'd between their primary datacenter and a disaster recovery location.

The Challenge

For this home fashion retailer, always-on communication between stores, distribution centers, buying offices, datacenters, and disaster recovery locations, was absolutely crucial for ensuring that the right goods make it to the stores in a timely fashion. Network and application performance degradations presented a serious threat to the business. In fact, whenever a buying office or distribution center was down for more than an hour, millions of dollars were lost. To mitigate this business risk, a CxO initiative was put in place to develop hot standby disaster recovery (DR) plans and corresponding failover processes.

The IT team was tasked with monitoring network uptime and ensuring availability of mission critical applications and services even in failover situations. Network congestion issues and lack of bandwidth, which interfered with application performance, presented a particularly vexing problem for the team. In addition, vitally important voice services were impacted, causing IT to literally pull their hair out trying to identify the root cause of the issues. Without adequate insights, IT was essentially flying blind and had to try scattershot approaches to resolving the issues. This necessitated the formation of a war room where finger pointing created delays in resolving the issues along with further consternation. Meanwhile, a need was identified for service assurance visibility in the new DR site being brought online, not just to continue assuring service delivery even in outage situations, but also to ensure that failing services over to the new location was successful.

Solution in Action

Whenever a problem arises, the first tool this retailer always reaches for is the nGeniusONE Service Assurance Platform with Adaptive Service Intelligence™ (ASI) technology. Having been a long-standing customer of NETSCOUT®, the IT team instrumented its primary and backup datacenters, distribution centers, and buying offices with InfiniStream appliances, the newest software-based InfiniStreamNG™ appliance, and nGenius Packet Flow Switches, so they can monitor network uptime and availability and quickly pinpoint congestion issues between the stores and distribution centers even in a DR scenario.

nGeniusONE dashboards and grid were deployed to investigate issues both reactively and proactively. New dashboards are built ad hoc as problems arise. In addition, an OptiView XG handheld network analysis tablet was deployed to troubleshoot Wi-Fi connectivity issues at critical board of directors meetings.

When voice issues were reported, IT relied on the NETSCOUT solution to reveal that some of the ways the company's SIP providers were provisioning service was causing issues on the network. This allowed IT to immediately correct and resolve the issue. NETSCOUT was also able to address application performance issues found in the company's remote offices. Insights provided by nGeniusONE found desktop bandwidth problems were being caused by employees' unauthorized streaming of videos that was congesting the WAN link, which wasn't sized to allow this, thereby interrupting vital business functions.

To support business assurance in a DR scenario, IT deployed a standby server in the DR datacenter, running a full instance of nGeniusONE configured as a hot standby for the server in the main datacenter. This ensured no loss of performance data in the event of a failover.

The Results

The NETSCOUT solution has allowed IT to shift from a reactive approach to its applications and service disruptions, and adopt a more proactive one. For a global retailer of this size, when small IT problems occur, the number of people affected is vast. NETSCOUT has enabled IT to find problems quickly whether the services are delivered from the primary or DR datacenter, so they can be fixed rapidly, saving time and money. By minimizing downtime, the company is able to prevent millions of dollars in losses, and in turn improve revenue.

NETSCOUT delivers effective end-to-end visibility into the performance of the retailer's IT environment, which is critical to service assurance. As a result, the IT team no longer has to defend the network first, allowing them to focus on finding and quickly resolving problems – in particular ensuring voice quality and bandwidth availability from the data center to buying offices, distribution centers and their disaster recovery site. Another benefit is improved IT team collaboration, reducing valuable time lost in unproductive war room finger pointing.

LEARN MORE

For more information about NETSCOUT Retail solutions visit <https://www.netscout.com/solutions/service-assurance-solutions-retailers>



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