

European Agency Ensures Data is Available When Needed

NETSCOUT Helps Agency Expand Evidence Collection, Extend IT Reach to Proactive Application Monitoring

HIGHLIGHTS

The Challenge

- Current-day network traffic overwhelming homegrown agency packet streaming solution
- Government guidelines for 14-day evidence collection retention
- CapEx budget limitations

The Solution

- nGeniusONE® Service Assurance platform
- InfiniStreamNG™ appliances, with extended storage units
- NETSCOUT® onsite training

The Results

- Improved data retention improves agency compliance with government guidelines
- Extends ROI of agency's legacy IT toolsets
- Improved network capacity management, new proactive application monitoring with NETSCOUT smart data



Customer Profile

With nearly 15,000 employees, this European Government agency provides a range of financial services upon which the country's residents and visitors rely, including tax collection, healthcare benefits delivery, and unemployment assistance programs.

In addition to overseeing these diverse programs, the agency's information technology (IT) team provides data center hosting services to other numerous other agencies, including such crucial interests as the Ministry of Finance.

The Challenge

This country's government provides data retention guidelines for the agencies supporting the nation's citizens and visitors. Current government guidelines call for this agency to retain data for a minimum of 14 days.

However, this agency's IT team found themselves encountering network traffic issues that precluded ongoing compliance with the government's data retention guidelines. Specifically, their internally developed packet streaming solution, which was also used as their "evidence collector," was not keeping pace with spikes in network traffic volumes entering their data center. Capacity management issues like these can lead to packet drops, resulting in inconsistent data retention. The government financial systems supported by this agency may also be impacted, with network delays prompting transaction processing issues.

The agency knew it was time to upgrade their homegrown packet capture technology to monitor all incoming wide area network (WAN) traffic, which was ranging from 4Gbit/s to 10Gbit/s.

As a publicly funded organization, the agency was obliged to use a government-standard tender process to solicit proposals from several of their identified vendors. The agency's highly skilled IT team took advantage of the associated tender document to define other technical specifications that were important to them, while also subjecting vendors to an extended Lab Test in a "live environment." This process was designed to enable the IT team to highlight those vendors capable of complying with both their technical requirements and budgetary limitations.

Solution in Action

Once the IT team saw the differentiators offered by NETSCOUT's technology in their live testing environment, the agency selected the nGeniusONE Service Assurance platform, with multiple InfiniStreamNG (ISNG) appliances providing the always-on monitoring and continuous network packet capture needed for both real-time and back-in-time analysis. The patented NETSCOUT Adaptive Service Intelligence™ hosted in the ISNG appliance generates smart data for the smarter analytics provided in views and reports in the nGeniusONE platform. nGeniusONE provides contextual analysis of this smart data and visualization of complex and geographically dispersed service delivery environments such as those supported by this government agency.

The high-capacity ISNG appliances are integrated with the nGeniusONE platform, supporting packet capture and analysis of services, service enablers, and network performance.

A major consideration in selecting NETSCOUT was its scalability to meet the requirements of the agency's storage needs. The ISNG appliances are equipped with extended storage units (ESUs) designed to provide the packet storage capabilities required to enable agency to meet the government's 14-day data retention guidelines. The IT team also prioritized the value of the ISNG appliance's hot-swappable drives, which can be replaced without loss of data.

The IT team also benefited from NETSCOUT onsite training services delivered in their regional language, which helped the agency get 40 users up to speed on using the nGeniusONE platform in their environment.

The Results

This IT team used the extended Lab Test phase to determine which service assurance technologies could perform as well as proposed by their respective vendors.

As the NETSCOUT solution is used at some of the world's largest, geographically distributed enterprise and service provider environments, the IT evaluators recognized from the start that the NETSCOUT solution would eliminate issues of packet drops and network latency in their environment. The ISNG technology seamlessly captured network packets at 10 Gbit/s network speeds without loss of data. The IT team also recognized the value that ISNG's always-on availability offers to agencies like the Ministry of Finance, as well as government end-users.

The Lab Test exercises also assured IT that the NETSCOUT solution could address their agency's precise network troubleshooting requirements, with the nGeniusONE search engine feature used to find a very specific and unique pattern the IT team had injected in the network.

The IT team also quickly recognized how they could realize extended return on investment (ROI) from their legacy toolset with the vendor-agnostic NETSCOUT solution. For example, their third-party logging system could be integrated with nGeniusONE to leverage NETSCOUT smart data to enhance their audit purposes. Further ROI is realized by integrating the agency's third-party management systems with the NETSCOUT solution via the nGeniusONE application programming interface.

The IT team rapidly discovered a wide range of other potential uses of the NETSCOUT platform, including leveraging ASI-generated smart data to fuel nGeniusONE smart analytics for proactive application monitoring.

nGeniusONE's integrated packet analysis capabilities provide IT with another tool for performing deep-dive analysis and forensic evidence collection of the government applications and services delivered to agency users and the country's citizens. The IT team is gathering necessary forensic evidence needed to address any performance issue with NETSCOUT.

Of additional importance, the agency's budget requirements for this project were also met, with NETSCOUT distinctly capable of offering a fully compliant solution at the most-desirable price point.

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Corporate Headquarters
 NETSCOUT Systems, Inc.
 Westford, MA 01886-4105
 Phone: +1 978-614-4000
www.netscout.com

Sales Information
 Toll Free US: 800-309-4804
 (International numbers below)

Product Support
 Toll Free US: 888-357-7667
 (International numbers below)

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