

Attaining a Proactive Monitoring Strategy, Cost-Effectively

NETSCOUT ASI Technology Automates Analysis and Reduces Need to Store Terabytes of Traffic

OVERVIEW

The Challenge

- Network expansion & upgrades necessitated upgrade in application performance management
- Goal to become more proactive

The Solution

- nGeniusONE® Service Assurance platform
- InfiniStreamNG™ appliances

The Results

- Delivering higher-quality services with automated analysis that alerts of possible issues before they impact users
 - More cost-effective and space-efficient solution for wire traffic monitoring and service assurance analysis
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Customer Profile

This large company is headquartered in Europe but is known across the 130 countries it operates in. With more than 80,000 employees worldwide, this company focuses on exploration, development, refining, and marketing energy products. From oil and liquid natural gas, to solar and other low-carbon energy, solutions are a major focus of this energy leader. They are well-known for their network of petrol stations serving millions of customers every day. The company is also involved in producing petrochemicals, fertilizers, and specialty chemicals for the industrial and consumer markets, as well as rubber processing, adhesives and resins production. It may go without saying that this energy company is heavily dependent on the availability and performance of their voice and data network to meet their business needs.

The Challenge

The company has several data centers around the globe to support their hundreds of thousands of employees operating in all their businesses – petroleum refining, manufacturing, and exploration, throughout their distributed, worldwide locations. The volume of traffic traversing this network and their data centers is substantial and includes common applications like email, Office 365, DNS, Web services, video for security, as well as other specialized applications for a variety of business purposes. For several years, the IT organization has employed troubleshooting tools to record and store packets so that when problems arose, they could look back and try to determine why. As much had changed in the data centers, remote production and manufacturing sites over the years, the IT organization had the goal to refresh and improve their continuous monitoring and performance management solution to meet their current needs.

In addition to the original 24 x 7 packet monitoring and analysis capabilities, the dedicated IT Performance Management team at the energy company sought more cost-effective data storage to retain packet data for a minimum of 2 days. Additionally, they wanted greater depth and detail in analysis, ease of use, and more unified support for voice, video, and data application support. Ultimately, they wanted a solution that would take them from the reactive mode of resolving problems post-event, to more proactive and more efficient, so they had the potential to find and resolve issues before they impacted their employees, partners, and customers.

Solution in Action

Designed into the critical search and evaluation process was a set of criteria sent to a few key vendors by the IT Performance team. After careful consideration, the energy company selected the nGeniusONE Service Assurance solution from NETSCOUT®. InfiniStreamNG (ISNG) appliances with NETSCOUT's patented Adaptive Service Intelligence™ (ASI) technology were chosen for monitoring the high-value wire traffic at all their data centers around the globe to generate "smart data" for smarter analytics with nGeniusONE analysis.

The nGeniusONE and ISNG solution were the finalists for the project for several crucial reasons.

Efficiency of intelligent packet storage – unlike the previous tool that required significant hardware to store a minimum of 2 days of packet data, the ISNG appliances have a unique capability to retain some, all, or none of the packets on an application basis. By not needing to save the entire packet and just the essential packet header, the NETSCOUT solution required far less storage than competitive requirements. The bonus for the energy company was that the NETSCOUT solution consumed far less rack space making it a far more "green" alternative.

Proactive, automated analysis and alerting – nGeniusONE with ASI smart data and smarter analytics is taking the energy company from reactive packet decodes and troubleshooting to a proactive group focused on application performance and service assurance. The nGeniusONE solution tracks and trends responsiveness and traffic utilization and alerts the IT Performance team when slowdowns and degradations are detected. The team now has time to research and pinpoint the source of the problem for resolution ahead of their users being impacted.

In-depth, detailed analysis for voice, video, and data - From a single common user interface, the IT Performance team can seamlessly and contextually navigate from health status in dashboard views, to service dependency maps, to communities of impacted users, to session analysis and service monitors that pinpoint errors and true sources of disruptions on an application or location basis.

The Results

The IT Performance team at this energy company met their goals with the addition of NETSCOUT nGeniusONE and ISNG solution. Top on the list was realizing they had a choice – rather than buying storage, they could acquire intelligence. They beat their budget goal by cutting capital expenditures in half, and the bonus was reducing OPEX with less demand on power, AC, and rack space consumption, as the solution required fewer boxes than alternatives. They have become a proactive team and are getting ahead of problems, with automated analysis and alerting of issues in their earliest stage of development giving the IT staff lead time to isolate and rectify the problems before users even notice.

The depth and versatility of the nGeniusONE solution are supporting the energy company's needs for today and will grow with their needs of tomorrow. They are monitoring the physical links of their data center today and plan to use the vSTREAM™ virtual appliances for visibility into their virtualized server farms as they become more widely deployed. This will extend the value of their investment in nGeniusONE and contribute to their proactive capabilities overall. As the IT Performance team takes advantage of these new capabilities, the value will be realized by the energy company and their underlying business operations.

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