

State Agency CIO Seeks to Stop Organizational Finger-Pointing with NETSCOUT

Single-Vendor NETSCOUT Approach Meets Strategic Planning, Open Compute, and Budget Needs

HIGHLIGHTS

The Challenge

- Ongoing IT challenges requiring time-consuming war room sessions to resolve
- Budget limitations
- Drive to modernize

The Solution

- nGeniusONE® Service Assurance platform
- InfiniStreamNG™ software appliances
- nGenius® Packet Flow Operating System (PFOS) Software for certified 10G switches
- nGenius Flow Collector software appliance

The Results

- Faster time to pinpoint and resolve end-user issues
- Reduced finger-pointing, improved collaboration
- Reduced CAPEX and OPEX with single-vendor approach and open compute platforms



Customer Profile

This Department of Human Services (DHS) agency delivers important benefit programs to the State's citizens. The DHS's responsibilities encompass programs that include financial and food assistance, public housing, employment, and child care services.

With the largest departmental budget in the state, the DHS leverages the efforts of more than 2,000 employees working at both central and regional offices across this U.S. State in delivering services as close to the recipients as possible.

The DHS's internal information technology (IT) team manages data center, network, application, and security service delivery, while also providing technical support to numerous other State agencies. While this IT team reports to the State Chief Information Office (CIO) in terms of governmental reporting, they have overall responsibility for daily oversight of the government agency technology environments they manage.

The Challenge

A Strategic IT Plan guides the State's vision for updating government service delivery technology in a cost-efficient manner that benefits program recipients, residents, and end-users. Under this plan, the State is focusing on digitally transforming their IT environment, including phased migrations to VMware® virtual platforms and an eventual move to cloud-based solutions. As a result, the IT team can find itself responsible for four-to-five concurrent digital transformation projects.

The team also needed to balance next-generation initiatives with managing daily IT operations, which was presenting its own challenges. With this one IT team managing numerous third-party solutions across dispersed government agency delivery environments, there could be a fair amount of finger-pointing when service issues surfaced.

"Help me stop organizational finger-pointing."

– CIO of State Department of Human Services to NETSCOUT

Such was the case when the DHS began experiencing application response time issues in their IBM environment. During the IT troubleshooting process, the Applications team reported there was nothing wrong with their application, while State's Network Operations team also claimed innocence. Complicating matters further: the IBM technology environment was managed by the DHS's Security team, which also claimed there was no issue on their end.

Lack of end-to-end visibility presented other IT challenges. For example, the IT team was expected to address response time inconsistencies for a server located in a data center being used as a common facility. Again, it was up to IT to reconcile root cause of this issue – was it the server, data center, or network issue, or some other service dependency that could not be visualized?

With their network growing, there was also a need for IT to deploy additional network taps to help monitor traffic entering the agency data center. The IT team had been reviewing a third-party technology approach for aggregating taps, but what they really needed was a packet flow switch (PFS) solution. This presented its own challenge – despite the large departmental budget, the agency made every effort to minimize overhead in favor of delivering funding to the programs and citizens of the state. Finding financial resources for a PFS would prove challenging.

The IT team also wanted to continue to take advantage of NetFlow data sources, but it was important for them to migrate any future collector technology to their VMware virtual platforms to meet their strategic goal to modernize with open compute platforms.

Solution in Action

The DHS IT team is addressing the State's Strategic Plan goals and ongoing tactical challenges by deploying the nGeniusONE Service Assurance platform with InfiniStreamNG (ISNG) software appliance technology in their data center and network environments. The patented NETSCOUT® Adaptive Service Intelligence™ (ASI) technology hosted in the ISNG software appliance generates smart data for the smarter analytics provided in nGeniusONE views and reports. nGeniusONE provides contextual analysis of this smart data and visualizes complex and geographically dispersed government service delivery environments, such as that supported by this IT team.

In answering the need for a true PFS solution that met their budgetary limitations, the IT team deployed the nGenius Packet Flow Operating System (PFOS™) software for 10G switches operating on a NETSCOUT-certified PFS 5010 commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) platform sourced by a third-party provider.

In addition, the IT team is meeting their need for NetFlow collection support on their VMware platforms by deploying the nGenius Flow Collector software appliance. In this manner, NetFlow data sources are incorporated in ASI-based nGeniusONE smart analytics and reporting.

The Results

The DHS IT team used smart data from the ISNG and nGenius Flow Collector software appliances for visibility into the business services traversing their data center infrastructure, applications, and servers. The nGeniusONE platform quickly revealed issues they'd been experiencing with application performance in their IBM environment, as well as server response issues in a common data center. With appropriate corrections applied, end-user experience has been greatly improved.

nGeniusONE is now seen as a common console that can be deployed anywhere in the DHS IT environment to provide a single pane-of-glass view into government service performance, regardless of vendor technology that may be involved. As a result, the IT team is reducing the operational chasms that were separating teams like network operations, application, server, and security operations, and they have demonstrably improved their overall cross-team collaboration.

The NETSCOUT PFOS, ISNG and the nGenius Flow Collector software appliance technology further satisfied IT's goals for open compute solutions that would support next-generation platforms like VMware, while also offering capital expense (CAPEX) relief needed by IT. The fact that the agency is benefiting from a full packet broker solution in the nGenius PFOS software at the same price point as a competitor's tap aggregation tool is truly icing on the cake for this IT team! NETSCOUT's PFOS solution also benefits the DHS Security team's ability to integrate nGeniusONE service alerts and triggers to initiate security measures.

IT is also reducing operating expenses by using NETSCOUT as their single vendor for service assurance, smart-data visibility, packet broker, and NetFlow technologies.

LEARN MORE

For more information about NETSCOUT Federal Civilian, State & Local Governments solutions, please visit:

<https://www.netscout.com/solutions/federal-civilian-state-local-governments>



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