



Catholic Human Services

Catholic Human Services Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Packeteer's network monitoring policy control system ensures that non-profit organization's network supports critical human service needs

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

As true in networking as it is in medicine, this philosophy, though easily understood, is rarely followed. When it is, the results can be astounding.

Take the case of Catholic Human Services (CHS) of Philadelphia. The non-profit organization is the umbrella for a multitude of offerings, including social services, healthcare services, nutritional and development services, the office for community development, a program for delinquent youths, a children's services division and outreach programs for children in crisis. It provides housing and homeless programs and dedicates resources to soup kitchens and hospices. Mental retardation services and adult-day care programs for those who are disabled are also part of the organization's offering.

With more than 1,000 computers at 96 sites used by about 3,500 employees, the organization knew that the number of workstations, and therefore the amount of traffic overall, would grow. To accommodate these growing needs, CHS migrated from a legacy frame-relay network to ATM. The organization depends heavily on an Oracle eBusiness suite. It's planning to deploy a clinical management software suite, and has already deployed IP telephony (VoIP).

CHS turned to QED, an IT professional services consultancy focused on strategy development, implementation and support solutions. QED offers CHS a managed service based on products from Packeteer®, a leading developer of application traffic management systems that ensure efficient, reliable application performance over the WAN. First, QED used Packeteer's PacketSeeker™ traffic monitoring solution to discover all of the traffic running on the network and determine the performance of mission-critical applications. Reports generated by PacketSeeker revealed some startling findings.

"I was very surprised when we ran our first reports," said CHS CIO Arik Hill. "We thought we knew what was on our network and were sure we had control of things like Morpheus and KaZaA (peer-to-peer file-sharing programs). But they were there, and they were running wild. The immediate response to implementing the solution was that we saw a lot of things we weren't expecting and didn't like."

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Director of Professional Services

"Because of all the new applications that creep up on the network, if you don't have a tool in place that can really monitor and control it, it doesn't matter how well the network is engineered - all bets are off," said QED's Director of Professional Services, Paul O'Neill. "The bottom line is this - if you open your WAN to the Internet, you will have people using WinMedia, RealAudio, POP3, and the list goes on. It's just impossible to stop."

Seeing the chaos on the network, CHS wanted to control the traffic. It needed to ensure that business-critical applications were given the bandwidth they needed to perform effectively and that recreational and less time-sensitive applications were throttled back or given lower priority. QED recommended that CHS upgrade to a managed application control service, based on Packeteer's PacketShaper® line of products. CHS is currently using two PacketShapers to manage traffic at 20 different points on the developing network but plans to ultimately manage application traffic at the 96 locations it has in the Philadelphia area.

By optimizing bandwidth in support of critical applications, organizations using PacketShaper are able to control recreational traffic, conduct accurate capacity planning, generate returns on existing network resources, and postpone costly bandwidth upgrades. PacketShaper classifies applications through Layer 7, analyzes their performance, allocates bandwidth through policy-based control and generates reports to validate intended results, ensuring that application performance supports business objectives.

"We analyzed the traffic at CHS and recognized it had a number of mission-critical, time-sensitive applications, including Oracle and VoIP traversing its wide-area networks," said O'Neill. "We wanted to be able to ensure that the performance of those applications was not compromised by others."

Deployment of the PacketShaper system as a managed application service was a win for both organizations. QED, which deployed the system on CHS' network, makes recommendations for QoS policies and maintains the installation. This allows CHS to take advantage of PacketShaper's monitoring, analysis, control and reporting without the staffing issues and up-front expense. While QED managed CHS' network, CHS can focus on delivering the services that so many people depend on in the Philadelphia area. QED monitors the performance of CHS' critical applications on a 24-7 basis, ensuring that response times for Oracle, VoIP and other applications falls in a pre-defined, acceptable range.

"We were in the process of building 96 sites from the ground up," said Hill. "We wanted to standardize on Cisco, but we also wanted QoS control. We really didn't want to make the investment in a capital expenditure for the PacketShaper products, and then have to micromanage it. The QED offering really hit the nail on the head for us."

Executive Overview

INDUSTRY

- Healthcare/Human Services

CHALLENGE

- Ensure network supports administration of critical human services
- Gain visibility into WAN traffic, bandwidth utilization
- Avoid costly link upgrades
- Work with QED, an IT professional services consultancy, to prioritize bandwidth allocation for wide mix of applications
- Control unsanctioned traffic like peer-to-peer file sharing

SOLUTION

- Deploy Packeteer's Packet Seeker and PacketShaper software upgrade to monitor and control application performance

BENEFITS

- Provides constant visibility into network traffic
- Provisions sufficient bandwidth to important business applications – regardless of changing traffic loads
- Extends existing resources by prioritizing bandwidth allocation
- Avoids costly bandwidth upgrades

Although CHS is standardized on Cisco products for its connectivity layer, the organization was hesitant to rely solely on Cisco's router-based QoS controls.

"The CiscoWorks product is phenomenal, but it really doesn't do the job that Packeteer does in terms of giving the level of control that we desired," Hill said. "We needed better control and more intuitive navigations through our QoS structures. Packeteer was a nice upfront model for shaping all of our Cisco gear."

QED and CHS have a weekly conference call to review the reports generated by PacketShaper and adjust policies accordingly.

"The reports give us a nice view into the traffic on each physical connection that we have," said Hill. "We've been very pleased with the mass of reporting options. We can begin with a summary report and then dig down into more than 60 separate metrics for each traffic type. It can get very detailed, and we can have QED make very specific adjustments based on that information."

With the in-depth visibility, analysis, control and reporting that PacketShaper offers, CHS knows that its networked applications are running efficiently and reliably. And with QED managing the administration of the Packeteer system, the IT department at CHS remains focused on the continued development of the expanding network.

"We're just now really moving into the network, and every day we're adding more and more users to it," said Hill. "We've been working with PacketShaper for six months and I can honestly say that without it, a lot of critical applications, including VoIP, just wouldn't work. It's exceeded all of our expectations."

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CIO