



Key Challenges

- Slow application response time in remote offices

Solution

- WebAccelerator

ROI

- Reduced response times from 10 seconds down to 2
- Increased application adoption
- Successful application deployment

Pharmaceutical Company

Supercharging a Pharmaceutical's Enterprise Portal

Executive Summary

A large global pharmaceutical company needed to develop a mission-critical enterprise portal to enable worldwide access to research information. Once the portal was deployed, it became apparent that while it offered fast local access, it was unacceptably slow when it came to users in the company's remote offices. After researching possible options, the company tested and deployed the WebAccelerator™ solution. Installation improved page download times from upwards of 10 seconds to between 2 to 3 seconds.

The Company

This global pharmaceutical research and development company is an innovator in drug discovery and development. With an emphasis on remaining a significant contributor of new pharmaceuticals worldwide, the company determined that it would be beneficial to have a single resource that would enable the its 4,000-plus scientists across the world to quickly and easily research information on millions of chemical compounds. This powerful Web application would have a single vendor platform and be hosted in the company's New Jersey data center. The rationale was that there would be significant cost savings realized by deploying a single framework and methodology. And, over time, additional data sources would be added and the portal framework would be used to develop new applications. After an exhaustive search, the company chose a vendor and deployed the application.

The Problem

Once the application was written and went into testing, it soon became apparent that pages, which would take less than one second to access in New Jersey, took over 10 seconds to download at the company's remote California and European offices. This level of performance was deemed unworkable and the IT research team was tasked with finding a solution. Today it is not uncommon for users to complain about the performance of supposedly very fast applications. Why is there this disconnect? It all depends on where performance is measured. For example, suppose an application takes 50ms to process a request and return a response. Most IT personnel would conclude that is fast. However, it might take an additional 300ms for one request and response to travel through the network in addition to the time needed for the application itself to collect information from databases or other applications. Considering that every web page requires many requests and responses, a user in a remote office might be waiting tens of seconds to access a "fast" application page. And that is "slow" performance by anyone's definition.

The Solution

At first, the team looked at symmetric compression and packet shaping technologies. However, these solutions primarily addressed issues associated with network bandwidth, compressing content or prioritizing network traffic - problems that were not the source of the system's bottlenecks. What was needed instead was a solution that could deal with network latency. That's when the company turned to the WebAccelerator. WebAccelerator improves application performance by performing a number of application optimizations that work around WAN latency.

Such optimizations include reducing the number and size of network packets between the WebAccelerator in the data center and the one in the remote office the ability to serve personalized pages directly from the remote WebAccelerator cache. Together, these solutions provide the perfect answer to today's network latency bottlenecks.

The Results

In advance of installing WebAccelerator, the pharmaceutical company tried a few optimizations to the application itself. This brought the page download time to between six and eight seconds, although some peaks were much higher. This was an improvement but still unacceptable. The WebAccelerator installation improved response times several fold, reducing response times to two to three seconds-the corporate standard requirement for web applications. Thus WebAccelerator was able to quickly and efficiently resolve a complex mission-critical problem without the considerable investment required by traditional solutions.

"The application deployment would have been a failure without it," said the Program Manager for the enterprise portal project. "WebAccelerator was the 'insurance policy' that contributed to the application's success. It is enabling our enterprise portal to become central to the work of scientists at this large company."



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