

Project Profile



IT Infrastructure

Riverbed • Installation • Consultancy

"Riverbed offers an unrivalled return on investment compared to the alternatives"

Saunders Choose Riverbed For Office Expansion

The Requirement

Saunders Partnership needed a cost effective, repeatable and manageable IT solution to allow them to use network services across a globally dispersed office locations.

The Solution

Excitech suggested Riverbed Steelhead; a Wide-area Data Service (WDS) system using a number of technologies to achieve WAN acceleration, the result of the combined technologies is a LAN-like performance for users working across a WAN.

The Result

The installation of Riverbed resulted in considerable cost savings for Saunders, in terms of hardware, software, and consultancy, compared to traditional IT expansion methods. After implementing Riverbed, Saunders has the ability to quickly set up new offices, store and backup data from one location, share live data between offices allowing collaborative working and successfully run a single Microsoft Exchange server for all offices.

Saunders Partnership is an 80 strong architectural practice, with offices in Welwyn Garden City, Bristol and Manchester. Founded in 1988 the practice offers a wealth of experience in retail, commercial, residential and industrial sectors including mixed use developments, master planning and urban design.

Until spring 2008, Saunders operated from a single office in Welwyn Garden City that had been the company's historical base since 1988. Their continued success resulted in Saunders employing 60 people by late 2007. This growth brought its own challenges as the office at Welwyn Garden City had reached its capacity and further expansion was required to accommodate an increasing number of workers. As recruitment outside of major cities was

proving challenging and relocation of the existing office to bigger local premises was cost prohibitive, the partners' thoughts turned to regionalising in cities where they were particularly active.

Saunders Partnership IT director Kevin Seggery knew a cost-effective, repeatable and manageable IT model would be required as new offices were still likely to require a significant investment in IT infrastructure.

It was at this point that Excitech suggested that for small remote offices LAN-like performance across a Wide Area Network (WAN) could be achieved through Wide-area Data Services (WDS) designed to accelerate data transfer between geographically dispersed offices. In autumn 2007, Excitech and Saunders began jointly exploring whether WDS systems by Riverbed would allow Saunders Partnership to achieve their objective without the trappings of expensive hardware, software, communication links and management overheads. After careful consideration and comparison against other WDS solutions, Kevin decided that Riverbed would meet all Saunders needs and requirements.

Riverbed Steelhead uses a number of technologies to achieve WAN acceleration; and the result is a LAN-like performance for users working across a WAN. In other words, it makes 3000 miles feel like 30 feet. In a typical deployment a Steelhead device is installed at a company's head office and then once at each remote office, here the Riverbed RiOS operating system applies a mixture of data, transport and application streamlining techniques. This process reduces data on the network and eliminates inefficiencies thereby optimising the connections.

Over time thorough testing of this concept was performed both at Excitech's head office and onsite at Saunders Partnership, the results were deemed to be as impressive. With the concept proven, Saunders conducted a final costing exercise to



double-check the solution was commercially viable and made comparisons to the cost of infrastructure, software and remote management. Even with the installation of a low cost server at each office (to facilitate local domain services and to store templates), the cost of ownership was overwhelmingly lower than other alternatives under consideration.

Saunders Partnership installed Riverbed devices into the head office in Welwyn Garden in late spring 2008 and opened new offices in Manchester and Bristol, each connected to the head office through low cost Riverbed Steelhead devices.

Kevin summarised the benefits Saunders had derived from Riverbed as being the ability to quickly set up new offices, store and backup data from one location, share live data between offices allowing collaborative working and successfully run a single Microsoft Exchange server for all offices.

In terms of performance, Riverbed offered greater improvements than small scale increases in bandwidth would have provided; and whilst LAN-speed WAN connections were available, the cost of implementing such links between Welwyn, Bristol and Manchester would have dwarfed the cost of the Riverbed implementation.

Riverbed offers an unrivalled return on investment compared to the alternatives and simplifies the provisioning and management of branch offices.

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