



Salt River Project Significantly Improves Application Response Times with ACE™ Analyst

“

Word has gotten around about internal success stories of problem resolution with ACE. When we take these findings and show them to the applications team, they are amazed.

”

*Shanon Jones
Network Analyst
Salt River Project*

Salt River Project (SRP) provides electricity to more than 2 million people in a 2,900-square-mile area in Central Arizona, an area known as the “Valley.” Founded in 1903, SRP is an integrated electric utility, providing generation, transmission and distribution services. SRP is also the largest water supplier to the greater Phoenix metropolitan area, with a water service area that spans 375 square miles. In addition, SRP manages the 13,000-square-mile watershed that supplies a majority of that area’s surface water.

SRP’s IT organization supports more than 4,500 internal users, and manages many applications, including GIS and web systems applications. When application transactions exhibit poor response times, the network team is frequently the first point of triage. They have found ACE Analyst invaluable for troubleshooting application performance problems. ACE Analyst accurately identifies the sources of response time delay, quantifying the impact of network effects such as bandwidth, latency, and protocol congestion. It facilitates collaboration with application support teams when the root cause is not within the network.

Generating Immediate Returns

Shanon Jones, SRP Network Analyst, recalls how quickly he became a believer in ACE Analyst’s value.

After only seeing a brief demonstration, Shanon utilized ACE Analyst to diagnose a poorly performing GIS application that was used for displaying electrical facilities. Slow response times had been attributed to some undetermined network problem, however, Shanon was able to identify the real root cause with ACE Analyst — processing delay in the client system. Upon further analysis, he determined that the video graphics card was unable to handle the large amount of GIS data for display. The problem was resolved by upgrading the card.

Shanon stated, “I was immediately converted to an ACE Analyst believer. In under 40 minutes, I had figured out how to use the product, identified the issue with our graphic cards, corrected the problem, and generated a professional-quality report to provide to management.”

Proving “It’s Not The Network!”

SRP’s machining garage uses a computerized system to check-in and -out tools. This vendor-supplied application was exhibiting erratic behavior, with 3-second response for most clients, but consistently exhibiting delays of up to 5 minutes for 4 or 5 clients.

All fingers immediately pointed towards the network team, however, since all the clients were on the same network switch, the

network team doubted that conclusion. In order to prove that the network was “not guilty” they needed to explain the response times variances.

Shanon performed an analysis, producing an ACE Difference Report comparing packet captures obtained from clients exhibiting 3 second and 5 minute response times respectively. ACE Analyst immediately diagnosed an application configuration setting as the source of the problem.

“The client’s application was checking for application updates on the vendor’s website and slowing down the transaction. The vendor had misconfigured this setting on a number of machines during implementation,” Shanon stated. “Without ACE Analyst it would have taken us days to determine the problem. It’s really tough for the network group to suggest an application, and not the network, is the source of performance problems - not without hard evidence — and that’s what ACE Analyst provides.”

Communicating Results

ACE Analyst automatically generates standardized professional-quality reports for network engineers, application developers, and management.

“With ACE Analyst, we can solve problems with networked applications quickly and cost-effectively,” Shanon remarked. “The reports were very helpful to us. To be able to perform all the analysis and generate a beautiful report to present to our executives was a winning feature. A picture is worth a thousand words, and ACE Analyst provides

powerful visuals. Very little convincing is required after that. There is no arguing with a pie chart.”

He further stated “Prior to ACE Analyst, we had to spend a lot of time digging into the actual application code when troubleshooting. Producing executive-quality reports was prohibitively time consuming. With ACE Analyst, from start to finish — identifying the problem, analyzing it, and generating the report — takes under 45 minutes.”

More Users, Greater Cooperation

ACE Analyst is available as a shared tool within SRP’s IT organization.

“ACE Analyst has put us in the spotlight many times in the 2 years we’ve been using it,” says Shanon.

For more information,
please contact OPNET: info@opnet.com

NASDAQ: OPNT