



e-TF1 Case Study

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Jean-Francois Bustarret
 Senior Network Architect
 e-TF1

France's Most Popular TV Station

e-TF1 is responsible for the website of France's most popular television channel, TF1, which attracts nearly three out of every four French viewers daily. The website, www.tf1.fr, features news, sports (in combination with Eurosport, Europe's most popular sports channel), interactive games based on such popular programs as The Weakest Link, video, content for mobile devices (WAP, SMS, imode, etc.), and many special-interest areas.

More importantly, the website is re-branded, in whole or in part, for many other companies in France, including one of the largest French banks, all major french ISPs, LCI (the leading French all-news channel, owned by TF1) and Bouygues Telecom (one of the leading wireless carriers in France and a sister company of TF1).

Overall, the website is the number-one media site in France, delivering up to 400 Mbps of video for over 14,000,000 videos a month, so all told, e-TF1 is responsible for seeing that millions of consumers can access this rich content no matter how popular or timely.

A Fragmented View of the Business

With such a rich mixture of media and content, e-TF1 found it difficult to manage the web site's performance and thus the user experience. Their device-level tools, such as MRTG, could give them a fragmented view of their operations on a device-by-device basis, but they had no way of obtaining a real-time view of overall site performance, the impact of traffic surges (such as resulted from World Soccer Cup coverage) on other programming, or even an accurate measure of peak vs. average traffic. The inability to accurately track traffic and the user experience also made it difficult to offer the kind of meaningful SLAs demanded by their portal customers. As well, the website is collocated at a telecom with peering to multiple ISPs, but e-TF1 could not see how these various ISPs performed to judge how various areas of the country were being served.

Go with the Flow

"The installation of the [ACE Live] appliance made a tremendous difference in our ability to see what is going on with the website," says Jean-Francois Bustarret, senior network architect at e-TF1. "Now we can see at any moment just how much bandwidth any given part of the website is using, its effect on other parts of the site, and the response time the users are experiencing. We are also able to track our performance for our portal



e-TF1 Problems

- No real-time view of site bandwidth or performance
- Hard to respond to traffic surges
- Difficulty judging quality of collocator's peering
- Inability to plan effectively for network expansion

ACE Live Solution

- ACE Live appliance deployed in Paris data center
- Real-time view of performance and utilization of all site servers
- Real-time view of user experience
- Highly granular data for capacity planning
- End-to-end view of ISP performance

e-TF1 Benefits

- Much faster problem identification and resolution
- Better control of collocation performance
- Ability to respond to traffic surges to prevent user disappointment
- Better SLAs for portal customers
- Better capacity planning for new services

customers more accurately, so that we can offer, and deliver, more meaningful service level guarantees to them."

He is also impressed by the near plug-and-play nature of the appliance. "Unlike MRTG, the [ACE Live] appliance isn't dependent on SNMP data from many different devices," says Mr. Bustarret. "Instead, it simply connects to a mirrored port on a switch, so it was delivering useful information almost immediately."

Keeping Fans Happy

e-TF1 found the appliance particularly useful during the World Soccer Cup, which resulted in a huge increase in traffic to the web site. "We could see the impact on the servers, and take action, such as temporarily throttling back less popular services, to make sure that soccer fans got what they wanted when they wanted it." He also notes the usefulness of the ACE Live appliance in monitoring the effectiveness of site load balancing. "We can see when a given server is working too hard and make the necessary adjustments right away before the user experience degrades."

The ACE Live appliance has also given e-TF1 a better handle on the performance of their collocation telecom and its peering agreements by revealing end-to-end performance across the different ISPs being used. And its ability to collect and store a year's worth of network data is giving e-TF1 the information they need to plan for further expansion. "Our video streaming in particular is growing amazingly fast, and now we can better estimate what kind of bandwidth needs we'll have down the road."

A Hawk's-Eye View

"Basically," says Mr. Bustarret, "we went from being virtually blind to having a hawk's eye view of the network; able to see the whole picture yet capable of zeroing in immediately on details for troubleshooting, capacity analysis, and planning."

For more information,
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