



“
For Swiss Post, [ACE Live] has proved to be a superb troubleshooting tool that saves us a lot of time and effort. Its clarity of presentation has improved our relationship not only with our internal customers, but with our network provider as well.

”
Stephan Badertscher
 IT Engineer
 Information Technology
 Swiss Post

More Than Just a Post Office Demands

The nearly 55,000 women and men of Swiss Post ensure the daily delivery of 13 million letters and half a million packages, making sure these arrive punctually in homes and businesses. Swiss Post handles mail, goods and logistics, financial services, and even passenger traffic—bus service in Switzerland.

And Swiss quality knows no borders. Swiss Post International (SPI), a subsidiary of Swiss Post, is based at 27 locations in Europe, Asia and the USA. SPI offers a bulk mailing service for letters in Switzerland and abroad, and has also partnered internationally to deliver customs clearance, parcel post, courier and express services, ensuring that its customers have speedy access to a truly global distribution network.

One of the Largest Networks in Switzerland

The Information Technology (IT) group within Swiss Post acts as a partner to the business units, developing and supporting company-wide IT solutions to advance corporate objectives. The Group is responsible for nearly 20,000 workstations and 1000 servers in four main data centers and 2000 locations throughout Switzerland.

The network itself is outsourced, but because IT is responsible for all IT and network services, they need visibility into the provider’s network as well as internal resources. “Being able to view the full network, including the WAN, is critical to our operations,” says Stephan Badertscher, IT Engineer in IT.

Speeding Problem Resolution

Although Stephan and his co-workers in IT were able to troubleshoot the network with their existing tools, this was often an arduous process requiring complex measurements and even the formation of a task force for particularly resistant problems. In addition, they could not perform historical analysis of network behavior to pin down problems and their causes after the fact. After a thorough review of their needs, they decided on a distributed ACE Live implementation, with four ACE Live appliances at four main data centers, coordinated by an ACE Live Director.

“We were surprised at how quickly the implementation went, and that the appliances starting delivering information about problems right away,” says Stephan. “While it is still too early to determine the ROI on the [ACE Live] solution, there’s no doubt that its flexibility and the speed with which we can resolve problems using [ACE Live] saves a lot of time and manpower. We no longer need complex measurement projects or task forces—[ACE Live] delivers the answers very quickly.”



Swiss Post Needs

- Effectively monitoring performance and utilization of outsourced WAN
- Troubleshooting and determining the source of application performance problems
- Historical view of performance
- Improved communication with non-technical internal customers

ACE Live Solution

- A distributed ACE Live solution, with four ACE Live appliances installed at major data centers, coordinated by an ACE Live Director
- Extensive real-time and historical reporting of over 60 critical metrics
- Reports network and application performance metrics in terms of business impact

Swiss Post Benefits

- Better communication with business units
- A faster and more efficient network team
- Better management of WAN vendor
- Improved troubleshooting efficiency and speed

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

Visibility into the WAN, and More

"One of the most important capabilities of the [ACE Live] solution is the visibility it gives us into the performance and utilization of the WAN," says Stephan. "No longer do we need to depend on the WAN vendor for information; we can see what's happening. This gives us the upper hand in dealing with the vendor."

Stephan also notes that ACE Live has improved problem-solving efficiency. "[ACE Live] enables us to easily spot changes in utilization, application response times, connection rates, failed connections and so forth, for all servers and applications," says Stephan. "For instance, tracking the response of critical common resources such as DNS, various proxies, and DHCP is one common use. And [ACE Live] gives us the information we need—with the Response Time Composition Chart, for instance—to quickly determine who has to take the responsibility to solve the problem."

As well, he says, the year-long historical database of the ACE Live appliances has improved their troubleshooting capabilities in another way. "Often, our internal customers, such as a particular branch, will come to us with a problem that occurred some time back and want to know if it was the network or not. With [ACE Live], we can very quickly find the answer and, if it is our responsibility, takes steps to ensure that the problem doesn't recur. This was impossible before."

Better Customer Relations

Since IT is tasked with serving the network and application needs of the business units of Swiss Post, satisfying their internal customers is very important.

"[ACE Live's] extensive reporting capabilities make it really easy to show our non-technical internal customers what is happening and what we're doing to improve their ability to get their job done. They really like this, and I believe they now have a better appreciation of the value IT brings to their operations."

Recommending ACE Live

Asked what he would say to a peer considering ACE Live, Stephan remarks, "It's hard to pick out just one outstanding function, because there are so many that a particular person might find useful. For Swiss Post, [ACE Live] has proved to be a superb troubleshooting tool that saves us a lot of time and effort. Its clarity of presentation has improved our relationship not only with our internal customers, but with our network provider as well."

NASDAQ: OPNT