GROUPE PRISMA MEDIA

France's Leading Magazine Publisher Deploys Tomorrow's Network Today

CASE STUDY

Highlights:

- Prisma Media, France's largest online magazine group and second largest magazine publisher is faced with the challenges of new technologies revolutionizing the publishing business

Industry:

- Publishing

Challenges:

- A network deployment capable of adapting to evolving business requirements

- An architecture delivering security, performance and flexibility for the future

- Integration with business continuity/ disaster recovery infrastructure

- Support for stable, secure wireless network deployment

Solutions Utilized:

- S-Series chassis

- IdentiFi Wireless Access Points and Controllers

- Netsight Network Access Control

- IP Multicast support

- Extreme Networks Virtual Switch Bonding (VSB)

Results:

- Security, redundancy and high performance for a network linking corporate HQ and two remote datacenters

- Deployment integrated with business continuity planning

- A stable Wi-Fi infrastructure, evolving to meet new demands

Introduction

Prisma Media is France's leading multi-channel publisher with a portfolio of 26 print titles and over twenty web sites covering key segments of consumer media including women's interests, food, television, entertainment, economics, and special interests. Prisma Media's ambitious growth strategy has accelerated their digital media activity with no plans of slowing down.

Over 1,000 employees and 100 freelance journalists contribute to the success of Prisma Media, producing innovative content and approximately 30,000 to 100,000 photos every day, with a continuous storage capacity of over 100 TB.

Having relocated their headquarters, replacing their five existing sites, Prisma Media's IT department was given an opportunity to redefine the corporate network architecture and replace the network. IT managers seized this opportunity as the existing network was becoming obsolete, impacting the line-of-business groups to respond effectively to new market challenges.

Challenges

Working practices at Prisma Media have radically evolved over the past few years. The development process is entirely digital, from initial concept to the print run. Files used in everyday activities – principally graphics and video – range from megabytes to multiple gigabytes in size. In such an environment, network bandwidth has an immediate impact on user productivity.

Moving to the new building offered a rare opportunity to deploy a leading-edge network, scaled to meet user expectations; and capable of adapting and evolving to meet future demands.

Before selecting a new network architecture, Prisma Media identified a number of requirements. High levels of performance and security, in particular, were deemed necessary to guarantee the integrity of files stored on the network along with rapid access to data. A flexible, easy-to-use, network management platform was essential for simple, day-to-day supervision and management of network performance. Lastly the chosen architecture needed to be capable of evolving to support high-performance wireless network deployments depending on future corporate needs.

The Solution

With precise, detailed project specifications, Prisma Media issued a request for proposals, resulting in the selection of Extreme Networks.

Mr. Simon, IT Operations Manager, explains "We interviewed a number of players in the market before settling on Extreme Networks. Extreme Networks offered a solution best fit for all of our requirements, at a competitive price point. Our historic relationship with Extreme Networks also influenced the choice, in that we wouldn't need to invest

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in retraining on new, unfamiliar solutions. Widely recognized as a networking specialist, Extreme Networks chose to reply in partnership with an integrator close to us and similar to us in size. Working with a supplier of an equivalent size, we can be sure that we represent a significant opportunity for them, and we'll get fast access to the best-qualified staff if we have any problems."

Prisma Media group operates with two remote datacenters independently linked by fiber to corporate headquarters to ensure high performance and redundancy. The second datacenter is the result of a focus on business continuity preparedness following a recent analysis of corporate risk strategies by the group. It hosts NAS and SAN storage infrastructure, blade servers and deduplication servers, and guarantees complete disaster recovery in the case of infrastructure failure at the principal datacenter.

The new network architecture calls for deployment of 25 high-end S3 Ethernet switches, with two chassis at each remote datacenter incorporating VSB ports supporting network virtualization. Two S4 switches complete the deployment. Over 2500 gigabit LAN ports have been deployed at the headquarters site, with certain trunks currently migrating to 10Gbps connectivity.

The Prisma Media network also connects to a dedicated inbound TV streaming network, with channels distributed by multicasting to 30 televisions spread throughout the headquarters to meet the needs of various editorial teams. Multicast protocols are automatically recognized by the S-Series switches to manage the video streams. The same switches support group management and data transport.

The interoperability of the Extreme Networks solution allows for 1,400 VoIP telephones to connect with the Cisco Call Manager servers hosted in the datacenters.

Rounding out the current deployment, two virtualized Wi-Fi controllers manage 60 access points delivering seamless connectivity to the growing number of users moving to mobile devices for access to enterprise resources.

Second Phase

Mid-2014 Prisma Media decided to break new ground by moving to a fully virtualized end-to-end network deployment. After researching different options, Prisma again decided on the Extreme Networks solution, virtualizing switches and blades in the two datacenters. Two separate connections link each blade to two switches seen as a single device. This way, when an incident occurs, failover is simplified and it guarantees infrastructure service continuity.

Results

Mr. Simon's expectations for the project were fulfilled by an incident-free, on-time roll-out:

"We've seen no problems with the infrastructure deployment, and the equipment is delivering on its promises at every level. The only hiccup was a cabling problem, mainly due to the fact we were moving into a completely new building. But Extreme Networks and its partner stood by us, reacting quickly and efficiently to clear up minor unforeseen issues."

The new network architecture is fully redundant, offering Prisma Media guaranteed availability and stable, predictable throughput for optimum reliability.

Currently 80% of switch ports support active users, while the Wi-Fi network supports 450 to 650 concurrent user connections – 4X the number seen when the network originally went live. The Wi-Fi network is based on two virtualized network controllers and 66 access points spread over the headquarters site.

"We haven't experienced the slightest issue with the network, and no problem with the Wi-Fi either. It's easy to manage user IDs on the wireless network with the Extreme Networks NAC software, included with the solution, which also gives us precise, detailed reporting."

"We were so confident in the quality of the solution we took the decision not to implement a formal SLA. The results have proved us right. Since the network went live, everything has worked smoothly and we haven't seen a single interruption. Telephone and television services work perfectly."

"Once again Extreme Networks has been the ideal partner, working closely with us throughout the pilot phase. Downtime for the switchover was just 12 hours. Today we're working with a solution that perfectly matches our needs and there's no doubt in my mind we made the right choice," says Mr. Simon, IT Operations Manager, Prisma Media.

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