

MORGAN SINDALL PLC

Teneo implements Riverbed Steelhead solution to help construction and regeneration group Morgan Sindall plc optimize its network infrastructure to deliver cost and efficiency benefits.



“ With Teneo’s help, our Riverbed solution has helped ensure that we get the most from our existing network infrastructure, reduce cost, improve our user experience and help us achieve our centralization objectives for our network.”

Ben Justin
Group Infrastructure Manager

Morgan Sindall plc

Morgan Sindall is a top construction and regeneration group employing over 8,500 people across the UK. It operates through five divisions of fit out, construction, infrastructure services, affordable housing and urban regeneration, which are supported by two specialist units of investments and professional services.

Morgan Sindall prides itself on running a decentralized, empowered organization with a small central executive team and each group company having a great deal of autonomy within the group.

The Challenge

To improve the flexibility and effectiveness of the network infrastructure to cope with business change

Each Morgan Sindall division has its own network infrastructure but is united by a central wide area network (WAN) operated by Morgan Sindall Group. Each of these individual network infrastructures has developed around the needs of the business and vary depending on legacy infrastructures. Some of the businesses have been acquired such as AMEC Design and Project Services (DPS), which was bought in 2007 and merged into Morgan Sindall’s construction division to create Morgan Ashurst and Morgan Professional Services (MPS).

Although each business works autonomously, Morgan Sindall wanted to ensure that best practice was adopted across all network infrastructures to improve user experience, reduce cost and increase efficiency.

“AMEC had a different philosophy to us, for example they had a file server at each office, whereas we were more centralized. We were asking questions as to whether we should move all data to a central server but didn’t know what this would do to the WAN. It was a bit of a Pandora’s Box.”

The Solution

Deployment of Riverbed Steelhead appliances

Ben Justin is Group Infrastructure Manager for Morgan Sindall, and is responsible for group IT communications and managing group network infrastructure including bandwidth provision and data security. When Morgan Sindall bought out AMEC DPS in 2007 and merged the majority of users into Morgan Ashurst and design and engineering consultancy Morgan Professional Services, Ben embarked on a nine month project to bring AMEC DPS into the Morgan Sindall network.

In Brief

Industry

- ▶ Construction and regeneration

Challenge

- ▶ Improve network performance
- ▶ Avoid costly bandwidth upgrades
- ▶ Implement data centralization strategy

Solution

- ▶ Deployment of Riverbed Steelhead appliances

Benefits

- ▶ Stopped unnecessary bandwidth increases
- ▶ Large CAD files transferred in seconds rather than up to 30 minutes
- ▶ Improved network traffic flow from hubs to central data centres
- ▶ Reduced IT infrastructure costs through server virtualization

Morgan Ashurst, the newly formed merged company, inherited around 70 former AMEC DPS offices and sites, with 2,000 users spread across the UK, with a network of 2-4Mb leased lines to the majority of these sites. The new merged business employed 500 designers who used to send data heavy CAD files, changing the profile of data on the WAN.

"After the AMEC acquisition, we reached a point where the infrastructure wasn't able to take much more without some serious investment."

Ben established that the existing network would not cope with the extra data traffic if data flowed to a central data server, and faced the dilemma of upgrading bandwidth links. IT colleagues at Morgan Professional Services had trialed two Riverbed Steelhead WAN optimization devices between two sites at Ipswich and Stratford-upon-Avon. 50 Mb CAD file transfer speeds were reduced to as little as 10 seconds.

"Without WAN optimization we found that, email was slow to download and open in the morning. The CAD file users would complain that it took up to 30 minutes to download a file and the PCs were slow to log on and off"

Morgan Ashurst considered solutions proposed by Teneo, IBM and British Telecom. With the combination of efficiency gains for designers wasting up to 30 minutes of billable time for each CAD download, the cost and unproven effectiveness of bandwidth upgrades, and the potential to remove the equipment and maintenance costs of individual office servers and move towards centralized data, Morgan Ashurst commissioned Teneo to roll out 50 Riverbed Steelhead appliances.

"Our choice in these offices was a Riverbed device verses the cost of the server, software, and the maintenance. The return on investment when you work out the savings made Riverbed an easy choice."

Each of the Morgan Ashurst offices was assessed, with fifty offices benefiting from Riverbed Steelhead appliances – the other sites were typically temporary offices on construction sites. Steelheads were also installed at Morgan Sindall's central data centres in London and Stratford. For each install, Teneo supplied pre-configured appliances and where required fitted the unit.

Where possible, Ben ensured that local storage servers at each site could be removed with data centralized at Morgan Sindall's data centres. Riverbed Steelheads were also installed in other group companies, with an additional 20 appliances across the group.

Benefits

Reduced cost, faster application performance, increased user productivity, centralized infrastructure

"With Riverbed, where we have 2Mb connections at our offices, the reduction in data traffic has been such that we have avoided upgrading as the connections perform well."

Through Teneo's Riverbed solution, Morgan Sindall has improved employee and network efficiency and can now work towards its goal of centralizing data files into two main data centres. With significant company growth, Ben had to make the decision whether to invest in costly bandwidth upgrades with no real guarantee of network improvement or look for alternatives. Riverbed Steelheads are helping to reduce data traffic by around 80% which has freed up network capacity.

"80% of our traffic is mail and file sharing. One of the many advantages of using Riverbed is the ability to pre-populate your email inbox. The appliance will pre-cache it, making email synchronization almost instantaneous. This saves a lot of bandwidth, especially at peak times such as 9am in the morning when 50 users log on, all straining the line to get their mail."

The user experience has improved in many ways with Riverbed helping with peak time network traffic such as pre-populating email accounts, and near instant downloads, with CAD designers able to download 50GB files in seconds rather than in half an hour which delivers return on investment through greater productivity.

"At our offices in Rotherham, we installed Riverbed for an office with 25 users and no file server. The users thought that Riverbed wasn't really making a difference, so we turned the Riverbed unit off and within minutes the team were asking to switch it back on again."

Data centralization is becoming a reality as Riverbed strips out any duplicated data flowing from the offices to the centre, making end users more confident in storing data centrally, reducing the need for purchasing or replacing office file servers. Riverbed is also helping to virtualize domain controllers and print servers to help strip out more capital and maintenance costs.

The Future

Riverbed Managed Service from Teneo

Ben has now opted for Teneo's managed service on a six month trial, with Teneo able to gain access to Morgan Sindall's Riverbed Central Management Controller unit via a secure VPN. Teneo will provide Morgan Sindall with detailed reports on network traffic such as trends and exceptions and ensure each Riverbed appliance is optimized and updated.

Ben summarizes:

"We chose Teneo because of their Riverbed expertise and their overall professional approach. Teneo is a nimble, responsive company – always accessible and easy to deal with."

About Teneo

Teneo is an Infrastructure Optimization Company that helps customers to understand and improve the way their IT works.

We do this by providing solutions in the areas of Management, Performance and Virtualization.

Teneo has over 1,000 customers across 40 countries and offers a portfolio of services that includes Training, Installation, Maintenance and Performance Analysis Consultancy.

www.teneo.net

About Riverbed

Riverbed's leading WAN Optimization solutions give organizations an order of magnitude increase in the performance of their network, application, and storage infrastructure.

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