



Unified Technologies

Unified Service Assurance (USA) powered by PathView Cloud technology provides a simple and cost-effective solution to network and asset monitoring for Tilson Technology Management

Introduction

Unified Technologies (UT) is a Technology as a Service (TaaS) provider focused on Managed IT, VOIP, Data and Video solutions. UT delivers industry leading services that enable businesses to buy, manage and secure the technologies they use to communicate and conduct business. UT features a broad range of expertise and resources in the areas of Hosted and Managed IT and VoIP Telephony, Hosted Applications, Managed Networks, Cloud Computing, ISP, Security and Compliance.

UT's COO Todd Wolf explains that they do more than just provide these services – they guarantee performance via strict SLA policies by conducting pre-deployment network readiness assessments, as well as provide troubleshooting services where they diagnose and remediate existing network issues when they are uncovered. Many of UT's services are cloud-based; UT recognizes the importance of providing its customers with visibility and remote performance management of those external services such as VoIPnet Hosted PBX and Unified Cloud computing solutions. UT also offers remote performance management of other business critical applications such as Salesforce and Google Apps. UT uses AppNeta's PathView Cloud remote performance management solution to assure that these applications and services are meeting performance requirements of customer locations and end users.

"AppNeta's PathView Cloud integrated solution was a natural fit for us after having had great success working with their legacy technology for more than 10 years. Its cloud-based deployment makes it time and cost efficient for us" said Wolf.

The Challenge

UT's customer, Tilson Technology Management, is an independent IT project management company located in Portland, Maine. When the company was in its early stages, it reviewed the options for a telephone system. Their research led them to Unified Technologies' VoIPnet Hosted VoIP PBX. The VoIPnet system was less expensive to deploy, provided rich enterprise level feature functionality and could easily grow along with Tilson's business. Tilson's business did in fact grow, and they now have offices throughout Europe and the Middle East. Their VoIPnet hosted PBX easily expanded to accommodate office phones in all of these remote international offices.

Due to its geographic diversity, Tilson has a deliberately minimalist approach to IT and telephone infrastructure. It was determined that it would be most efficient for them to rely on cloud based and outsourced services. This has led to a requirement to have visibility and monitoring through their network and out into 3rd party networks and other applications.

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Todd Wolf
COO

Unified Technologies

PathView microAppliance



AppNeta's PathView microAppliance is a small, zero administration device that remotely tests and troubleshoots complex networks, even through third-party infrastructure.

The Solution

To provide these enhanced monitoring and diagnostic capabilities, UT implemented their cloud based “Unified Service Assurance” (USA) for networks monitoring service powered by AppNeta’s PathView Cloud technology. Using the PathView Cloud service, both Tilson and UT can monitor the performance of network hardware, VoIP handsets, and user laptops/workstations. Most of the latter are connected to the LAN through the built in Ethernet switch port on the Aastra VoIP phones or are wireless, further reducing the number of paths that call for continuous monitoring. Tilson’s outside paths target the gateways for its segregated VoIP and data external links, and a few of Tilson’s high-priority hosted services/applications.

In order to determine the cause of periodic upstream network congestion, Tilson turned to their PathView Cloud service while working with the support team at Unified Technologies. Tilson’s network engineer, Jason Carpenter, simply plugged the PathView microAppliance into their primary switch, let it run a network discovery, and then created specific Service Quality Definitions “SQD” for “Client LAN” devices (outbound utilization). The offending device was flagged with an alert in short order. It turned out to be a device that Tilson didn’t have immediate access to, but with the source of the issue isolated, it was a simple matter to diagnose the situation from a packet capture and flow analysis using the FlowView Plus module of the PathView Cloud toolset. It turned out to be a mis-configured auto-backup client to an offsite service.

Most of Tilson’s end user issues fall into two broad categories:

1. Network speed: “The interwebs are slow!” PathView Cloud alerts Tilson of irregularities (packet loss spikes, etc) in a data path ahead of an end user complaint, which means Tilson’s staff/network engineer is already discussing the issue with their Internet Service Provider. More commonly, the path abnormality is visible from the client PC which helps determine whether it is a capacity utilization issue, i.e. several applications are running heavy downloads/uploads simultaneously such as streaming YouTube and Pandora, at the same time while saving a large file to the cloud storage service. This insight into the network path of the specific user helps manage the end-user’s concern as well as usage, and results in a visible return of that user’s path to reasonable activity levels.

2. Call quality (audio artifacts, intermittent drops, etc): With PathView Cloud’s historical data, it is refreshingly simple to report back with a perfectly clean incident time snapshot of the path from the VoIP phone, to the Edgemark (ALG), out to the end of Tilson’s managed voice route. This invariably results in the user confirming that the party on the other end of the call was on a cell phone, driving at highway speed in a poor wireless connectivity/service zone. Occasionally that has not been the case, and having the diagnostic information available up front has allowed UT to quickly confirm a connection problem further upstream from Tilson’s managed QoS path. Further, they are able to immediately route around the faulty path.

The Result

Tilson has used UT’s PathView Cloud service to optimize their network and as a result, problems have dramatically decreased. Each time an end user reports an issue, Tilson is able to use UT’s PathView Cloud service to easily isolate the cause and work with the appropriate carrier or service provider to correct the problem quickly.

What sets PathView Cloud apart from other network performance monitoring tools? PathView Cloud provides a simple and cost-effective solution to network and asset monitoring with minimal configuration, zero maintenance of the monitoring micro-Appliance and zero requirements for the service provider or end-user to own storage of historical data.