Challenge

Mr. Ian Morgan, Assurity’s IT manager, and his colleagues needed a tool to monitor the diverse network infrastructure that supports the company’s five far-reaching branches, as well as help them assess their immediate and future bandwidth needs.

The Assurity IT department had no network-monitoring solution in place and had, at one point, unsuccessfully attempted to use Windows Performance Monitor to manage its servers.

Assurity’s ISP provided the company with a basic bandwidth-monitoring tool that possessed limited functionality and couldn’t provide true granularity in its reporting.

The company’s branches are connected by point-to-point T1s and share 3Mbit of Internet connectivity. The IT department operates in a robust networking environment that – as an example – includes NetFlow setup for all of its Cisco devices to filter based on IP range, as well as several custom definitions to recognize various traffic patterns such as RDP and TCP Printing.

Solution

Morgan selected Paessler’s PRTG Traffic Grapher -- after also looking at other products -- because it appeared easy to customize and would allow him to incorporate his own counters into the monitoring solution.

The Windows-based PRTG software gives Assurity’s IT department the tool it needed to effectively monitor and classify the company’s bandwidth usage. PRTG allows the department to both view live readings of bandwidth usage and assess long-term usage trends on its network devices. The Assurity team also uses PRTG to monitor memory and CPU utilizations.

Morgan and his colleagues display their findings in various easy-to-read graphs and tables, which they customize to meet their specific reporting needs.

Company Profile

Assurity Financial Services, LLC is a full-service mortgage company headquartered in Englewood, Colorado. The company operates five branches in the Western U.S. and has approximately 200 employees. Assurity’s branches offer a comprehensive suite of lending solutions that allow homeowners to purchase homes, refinance their existing homes or take out traditional home-equity loans.

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Ian Morgan
Morgan added that installing and managing PRTG is “easy” and that the software “co-exists” well with the rest of his network.- but it hardly felt like any time at all.“

To have all of this functionality, to have instant access to detailed facts and figures in an easy to understand format makes Rogier Boeken’s working life much easier and problems that might have occurred don’t as he gets prior warning.

**Benefit**

Morgan and his colleagues have used PRTG to generate various historical bandwidth and performance statistics that have helped them be “much more proactive” in deciding when more bandwidth is needed, if user load requires a new CPU and if memory should be increased to support work load.

Assurity’s employees work in a terminal-based environment that requires constant supervision by the IT department to sustain an acceptable company-wide working environment. PRTG, Morgan said, has enabled the IT department to look at networking trends over time, which prevents Assurity from making “hasty” operational or networking decisions due to small spikes in activity. Assurity’s IT-related decisions are now informed and purposeful.

For instance, several branches were experiencing slow response times with their Internet connections. Using PRTG, the IT department determined the branches were saturating their circuits. The PRTG-supplied data, Morgan said, made it an “easy sell” to persuade management to invest in more bandwidth. The branches’ employees are now operating at acceptable bandwidth levels.

Morgan added the he would “absolutely” recommend Paessler’s PRTG to his colleagues and peers.

“The low cost and easy implementation makes the solution a simple one to recommend,” Morgan said. “We have purchased a product that does exactly what it says.”