National Insurance Provider Boosts Application Performance for Remote Indian Offices

Customer Case Study

National Insurance Corporation Limited of India (NIC) delivers near real-time performance for its core applications to remote offices with Cisco's Wide Area Application Service (WAAS).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: National Insurance Corporation Limited of India

Industry: Insurance

Location: India

Company size: 1,000 branches and 16,000 employees

Challenge

- Endured slow application access and response times in remote areas due to high network link latency rates
- Saw poor user productivity as a result of slow application access and response in remote areas
- To upgrade network acceleration without pricey bandwidth purchase

Solution

- Cisco Wide Area Application Services (WAAS)

Results

- Remote users receive application response rates equal to that at HQ
- Increase in remote users productivity rates
- Overall dollar value reduction in operations

Introduction

Incorporated in 1906, National Insurance Corporation Limited is one of India's largest general insurance company wholly owned by the Indian government, with a track record of more than 100 years. The company has an extensive branch network and operates from 24 regional offices and 1,196 branches as of March 31, 2010.

Business Challenge

NIC has many users across over 1,000 branches throughout India. These branches connect to their main data center using a decentralized network model that links remote offices using a mix of 64 Kbps and 128 Kbps connections. Under this model, NIC's remote offices were facing slower application processing due to high WAN latency, heavy network traffic, and increasing transactions, among other factors.

In order to improve their business offerings and capabilities, NIC began plans to move to a new Core Insurance Application (CIA). However, the added functionality was also expected to increase bandwidth demands. "Our current users were already experiencing slow network performance, even with applications such as Lotus Notes. Furthermore, boosting our network connections to 128 Kbps at remote locations only provided minimal performance

"Cisco demonstrated their WAAS solution onsite, and showed us how it would work with our existing infrastructure. In particular, they showed us how Cisco WAAS worked seamlessly with our existing Network Access Control Appliances to authenticate, authorize, evaluate, and remediate remote users before they can access the network. It proved that you could have application performance without sacrificing security."

D. K. Sinha, Deputy General Manager (IT), NIC

improvements. So we knew that we needed to do something different to boost application performance to cater for the new core insurance application," said Mr. D. K. Sinha, Deputy General Manager (IT), NIC

The bandwidth increase to 128 Kbps at remote localities also came with a heavy price tag. As a result, NIC needed a new network solution to accelerate applications, cut branch infrastructure costs, and simplify remote data protection.

Solution

NIC wanted an integrated solution that would satisfy its HQ and remote office application requirements on the current infrastructure, without compromising security, while meeting anticipated CIA requirements. The only vendor on the market to meet NIC's requirements was Cisco Systems.

Cisco's Wide Area Application Services (WAAS) is a comprehensive WAN (Wide Area Network) optimization and application acceleration solution. Through safe caching, protocol acceleration, message batching, read-ahead, write-behind, stream splitting, and more, WAAS mitigates WAN link latency so that data throughput is fast. Through collaboration with application vendors, Cisco has created application acceleration technology that works through application-specific support, including Common Internet File System (CIFS), Windows print services, Network File System (NFS), Messaging Application Programming Interface (MAPI), Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP), Hypertext Transfer Protocol Secure (HTTPS), and enterprise video.

"Cisco demonstrated their WAAS solution onsite, and showed us how it would work with our existing infrastructure. In particular, they showed us how Cisco WAAS worked seamlessly with our existing Network Access Control Appliances to authenticate, authorize, evaluate, and remediate remote users before they can access the network. It proved that you could have application performance without sacrificing security," said Mr. Sinha.

"Cisco WAAS was able to boost network performance significantly. We were very pleased with the results."

D. K. Sinha, Deputy General Manager (IT), NIC

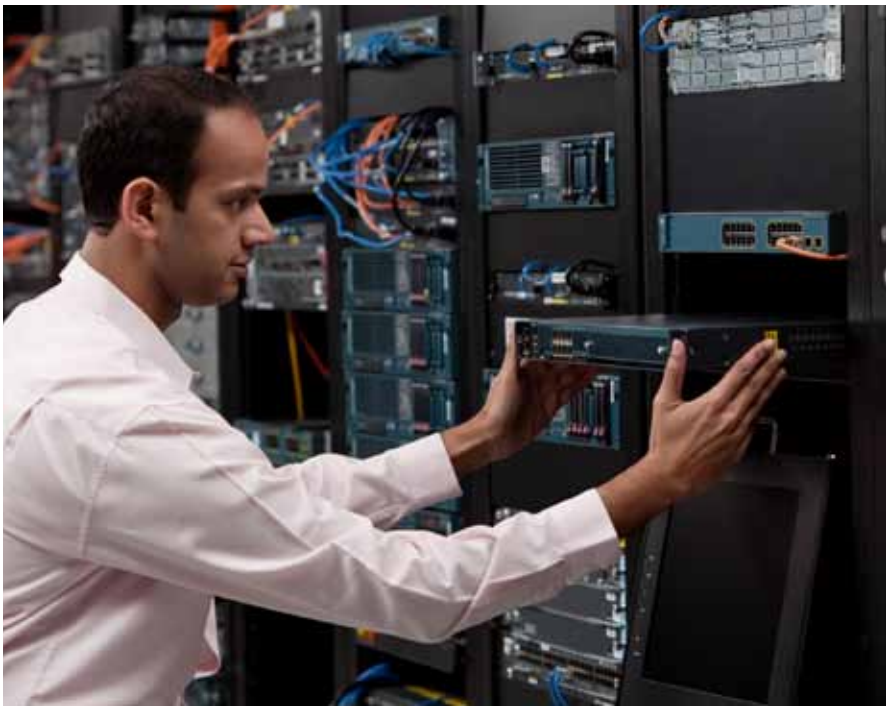
Using WAAS, NIC simulated their data transfer scenarios on WAN links with bandwidths of 64 Kbps and 124 Kbps from its remote offices. Employees at these remote localities who were users of Lotus Notes, Microsoft, and Oracle 11i reported that overall application access speed and performance had indeed improved. "The goal of the onsite tests was to gauge how the new network solution improves transactional performance and quickens the data transfer rate between the centralized data center at HQ and our branch operations. Cisco WAAS was able to boost network performance significantly. We were very pleased with the results," said Mr. Sinha.

In the end, Cisco WAAS was chosen due to the following factors:

- Delivering the best acceleration while ensuring end-to-end visibility and security
- Integrating easily with other equipment such as routers in the network
- Meeting technical requirements
- Complete support from Cisco and its partners

Phase one would comprise of testing network solution implementation on a sample pool of 78 branch offices with its current applications and processing needs. Phase two would comprise of full technology deployment for when CIA is ready to be rolled out and implemented across 1,000 localities in India with Internet Protocol (IP) telephony, wireless access, and the new network solution technology.

Phase one began in July 2009 and ended a month later in August 2009. Using both a centralized data center and remote office deployment model, they deployed a redundant Cisco Wide Area Application Engine 7341 (WAE-7341) at two data centers. These data centers were then linked through the Wide Area Application Engine 512 (WAE512) to 78 branch offices.



Results

With the WAAS solution in place, NIC personnel in remote localities are experiencing better productivity with quicker application access and processing times. “We had no phase one implementation issues due to great communication between our engineers and Cisco’s team, as well hands-on support. All queries on security were satisfied and surpassed during the onsite demonstration,” said Mr. Sinha.

As a result of its successful phase one implementation, NIC is looking forward to phase two implementation in March 2011 where the system will be scaled to support 1,000 branch offices in remote localities. Also, users will have improved IP Telephony and wireless offerings, rollout of CIA, and access to Cisco Digital Media System (DMS), a family of applications that provide video content in several formats.

For More Information

For more information on National Insurance Corporation of India (NIC), visit: www.nationalinsuranceindia.com

For more information on the Cisco Wide Area Application Services, visit: www.cisco.com/web/go/waas

Americas Headquarters
Cisco Systems, Inc.
San Jose, CA

Asia Pacific Headquarters
Cisco Systems (USA) Pte. Ltd.
Singapore

Europe Headquarters
Cisco Systems International BV Amsterdam,
The Netherlands

Cisco has more than 200 offices worldwide. Addresses, phone numbers, and fax numbers are listed on the Cisco Website at **www.cisco.com/go/offices.**