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Jack In The Box, Inc.

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Jim Antoshak| Jack in the Box, Inc
Network Support Manager

About Jack in the Box, Inc.

Jack in the Box Inc. (NYSE: JBX) operates and franchises two restaurant chains, Jack in the Box® and Qdoba Mexican Grill®, in a combined 42 states. The company also operates more than 50 proprietary convenience stores called Quick Stuff®, which include a major-branded fuel station and are developed adjacent to a full-size Jack in the Box restaurant.

Jack in the Box is the nation's first major drive-thru hamburger chain, with more than 2,100 restaurants, and Qdoba Mexican Grill is an emerging leader in fast-casual dining, with approximately 370 restaurants. With headquarters in San Diego, Jack in the Box Inc. has more than 45,000 employees.

Challenge

The IT staff at Jack in the Box oversees a vast corporate network, from their headquarters in San Diego to regional field offices nationwide. The company maintains a second network linked via satellite that shares traffic from headquarters with over 2000 locations across 30 states. The entire infrastructure consists of over 4000 nodes.

"We separate our corporate traffic from our restaurant traffic," explains Jim Antoshak, Network Support Manager. "Corporate traffic is much more varied and comprehensive and we don't need to make our restaurant traffic over-complicated."

In working with various routers across the network, Antoshak faced many challenges while monitoring different types of traffic being passed from site to site. For example, a WAN network deals with potentially lower speeds than a LAN network.

"We're comparing sub-T1 speeds with fast Ethernet speeds," Antoshak explains. "We needed to quickly view all the WAN traffic that was out there to maximize our pipe."

Solution

For their deployment of the Observer Performance Management Platform, Antoshak chose Observer Analyzer Suite and a combination of Observer Software and Hardware Probes across both company networks. The Jack in the Box IT team could now view WAN traffic in total or by specific device. The team quickly determined there was much unneeded traffic being sent at inopportune times.

"We were quickly able to make our WAN more efficient by controlling what data was being sent and when," said Antoshak. "This was the key aspect to relieving our network congestion."

Complete Network Control

The Observer Platform allows network professionals to understand and control their network. For example, with Analyzer, network administrators can run baseline reports to gauge what is normal for the network. Once a baseline is complete, administrators may compare network statistics over time to the baseline to recognize unusual activity, congestion, and other issues.

Before deploying the Observer Platform, Jack in the Box was not able to determine current network traffic levels. Now increased traffic, broadcast storms, and congestion are instantly recognized. By using Analyzer's Real-Time Expert, network managers are immediately alerted to network abnormalities and given plausible solutions.

"First I'm notified about issues on particular segments, like broadcast storms, through alarm devices that I configure," said Antoshak. "Then Analyzer provides me with ideas of causes and solutions to the problems. The Observer Expert Analysis feature is excellent for this."

Capacity Analysis

The Observer Platform's "What-if" Analysis lets Jack in the Box forecast the impact of possible network or application changes without investing in new equipment. This "live-modeling" predicts network bandwidth and response time impacts for topology changes (e.g. upgrading from 10/100 to gigabit Ethernet) or by changes in variables such as average packet size, client-to-server packet ratio, latency, server load and number of users.

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Proactive Management

With the Observer Platform, Jack in the Box network administrators not only monitor their networks but also proactively manage them. Through "What-If" Analysis, Network Trending, Reporting and other features, they're preparing to meet tomorrow's challenges.

"A lot of times we're preventing future problems. It's not that I don't want users to notify me with issues, I just don't want them to see problems to begin with," said Antoshak. "By pushing the existing topology, we're embracing proactive management of our entire network."

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