

Case Study

Growing Conglomerate J.M. Huber Relies on Visual Networks

J.M. Huber Corporation is a diversified, multinational supplier of engineered materials, natural resources and technology-based services to customers spanning many industries, from paper and energy to plastics and construction.

A global entity and one of the largest family-owned businesses in America, Huber relies extensively on its network to connect its many locations. Its network is mission-critical in nature, as it runs single-instance, global enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems that touch nearly every function of all of its businesses. A network outage or severe performance problems could have a significant impact on its operations.

“With the importance of our global network, we require granular visibility into the characteristics of our WAN traffic,” said Vince Solano, Chief Information Officer at Huber. “Like most enterprises, we needed a solution that could manage major network-related issues and enable us to maximize availability, optimize bandwidth utilization and enhance security.”

The Deployment

To optimize network performance, Huber utilizes Visual UpTime *Select*, an application and network performance management solution from industry pioneer Visual Networks. A modular offering, Visual UpTime *Select* enables organizations to intelligently manage application

J.M. Huber Corporation

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- One of the largest family-owned companies in America

The Challenges

- Obtaining granular visibility into the characteristics of its WAN traffic
- Managing major network-related issues, including availability, bandwidth and security
- Supporting application prioritization as a component of its MPLS migration

The Solution

- Visual UpTime *Select*, leading network and application performance management solution

The Benefits

- Reduces network costs by optimizing bandwidth allocation and minimizing downtime
- Enables IT organization to more easily manage the network
- Monitors application prioritization in support of MPLS-based network
- Eases the roll out of new applications over the network

and network performance and availability across the enterprise by arming IT managers with the highest degree of visibility across the infrastructure, providing a full view into remote sites.

Huber was one of the first adopters of the Visual technology, and the initial deployment, nearly seven years ago, was done when the offering was unique to the industry. The solution was implemented to help the company manage and troubleshoot its wide area network.

“We originally selected Visual’s technology since it met our requirements for in-depth WAN insight,” stated Solano. “The tool was extremely comprehensive and yet at the same time was very easy to use. It also enabled us to establish the requisite utilization baselines so we could plan future expansion in a more predictive, proactive manner.”

Within three months after the deployment, the Visual solution proved its mettle by helping Huber resolve the major challenges that led to the selection of the offering. It also came in handy in managing a variety of day-to-day issues that all network managers face.

“Huber has relied on the solution as a troubleshooting tool in a number of instances,” commented Solano. “For example, we have used Visual UpTime Select to identify top talkers who saturate the network with non-business-related activities. It has also proven valuable in isolating traffic patterns that are associated with viruses or worms.”

The Move to MPLS

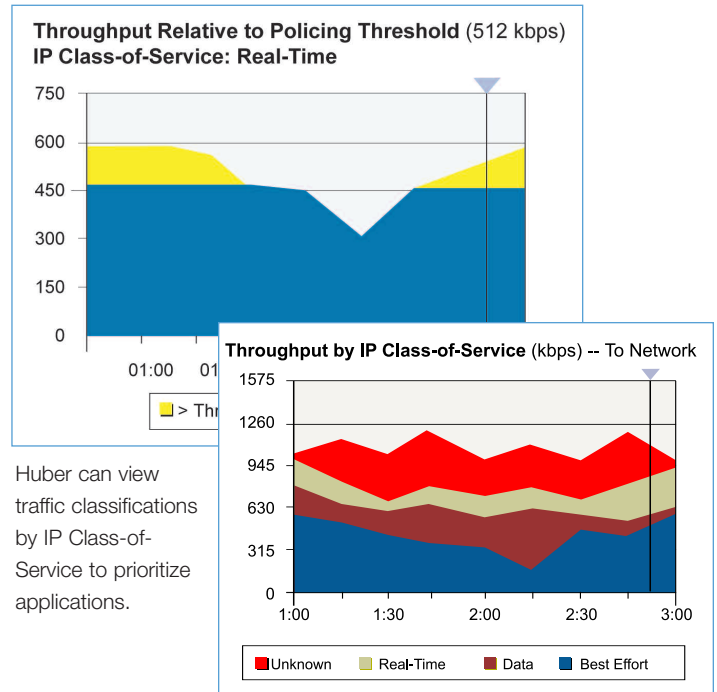
To properly prioritize and manage the growth of applications on its network, Huber migrated its network to Multi Protocol Labeling System (MPLS) technology nearly two years ago. This move was driven by the need to support a major global ERP initiative.

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When the organization made the move, it utilized Visual UpTime *Select* to better manage and optimize bandwidth for this mission-critical application roll out without over-provisioning and exceeding budget limits.

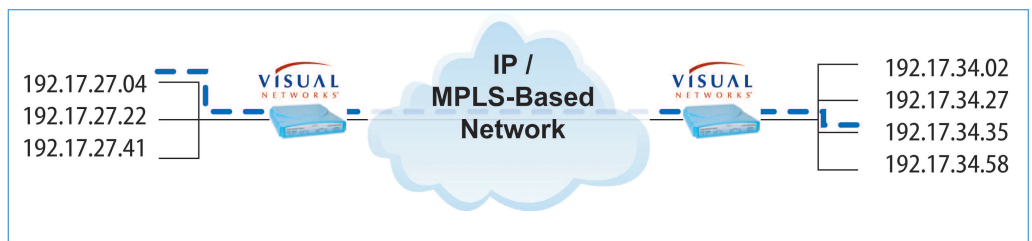
“Visual’s technology was instrumental to the success of our multi-million dollar ERP initiative because it gave us the knowledge and confidence that our MPLS network was fully optimized for the roll out,” stated Solano. “The Visual solution allowed us to see how our ERP application performed on the network by enabling us to view application throughput in real-time as well as quickly detect and troubleshoot traffic anomalies. As we made our migration from frame relay to MPLS, the technology once again proved itself by providing us with the functionality to ensure the migration and the ensuing ERP deployment was quick and painless.”



Managing Daily Performance

Visual’s technology helps Huber proactively manage network performance. A number of the core product features are regularly utilized by Solano’s group.

In an MPLS-based network, end-to-end connectivity changes from Layer 2 based connectivity (virtual circuits) to Layer 3 based connectivity (IP subnet to IP subnet). The change in connectivity is challenging for



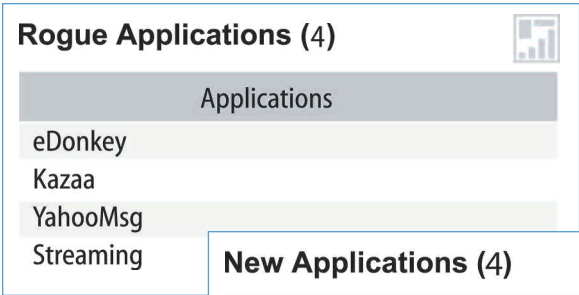
Visual UpTime *Select* provides complete end-to-end visibility by automatically tracking IP Subnet to IP Subnet connections across the enterprise.

many enterprises, but with Visual UpTime *Select*, Huber is able manage end-to-end circuits looking from IP subnet to IP subnet. Consequently, troubleshooting - whether at the port layer, at individual IP subnets, or class of service configuration - is made much easier by isolating where the problem exists. Using the reporting functionality, Huber can determine which circuits need more bandwidth by looking at the granular information provided by Visual UpTime *Select* at each site in the network.

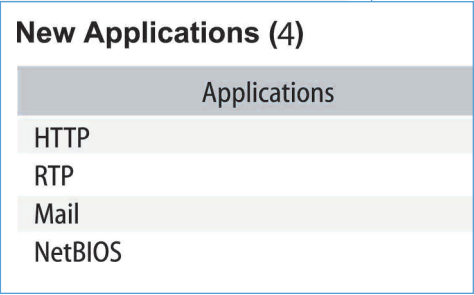
Today, Huber’s network is served by three major carriers and supported internally by a handful of individuals. The company’s network challenges are increasingly focused on managing the wide array of traffic - ERP, Citrix, email and Web among the most notable - traversing its network. In fact, the organization has seen a 35 percent growth in application utilization in the past few years across its seventy global sites.

“Visual’s technology plays a major role in helping the organization track application utilization and uncover rogue or unauthorized applications on the network,” said Solano. “Using the tool eases the roll out of new applications by measuring the impact on network performance.”

Like most enterprises, Huber utilizes Visual UpTime Select in conjunction with other network management solutions. They use Ipswitch’s WhatsUp as an early warning console alarm system. WhatsUp has a topology map of Huber’s sites and alarms if a site goes down. Visual UpTime Select is then utilized to drill down to get greater details if an outage is reported.



Huber receives alarms when Visual UpTime Select auto-discovers both new and rogue applications and servers.



The Final Word

The Visual Networks technology is at the heart of Huber’s growing, global infrastructure. As the company grows, so will its utilization of Visual UpTime Select.

“Using Visual UpTime Select, we are able to pinpoint network traffic anomalies before they disrupt the flow of business,” concluded Solano. “The Visual technology is the core component in our WAN management solution. It saves us significant time and money and allows us to deliver an exceptionally high level of WAN service at a reasonable cost.”

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