

JEO Consulting Group



With Riverbed SteelHead consultants can work efficiently from anywhere regardless of network limits

JEO has nine offices located around Nebraska and two in Iowa. The firm relies on its wide area network (WAN) to deliver business-critical applications (such as CAD, GIS, and financial software) to the offices from its Omaha data center, and also to enable inter-office collaboration. “Given that we have engineers, planners, and architects spread across two states, we depend on our WAN infrastructure to link them all together,” says Travis Klasna, who was IT manager at the time the WAN was put in place.

The initial experience of using the WAN for these purposes had limited success. Part of the problem was that some of the firm’s offices are in such small towns

and have so few employees that it was cost-prohibitive to equip those offices with sufficient bandwidth for handling large files. “We want to have a presence in those small municipalities,” explains Patrick Dix, current IT manager at JEO. “It would be nice to throw a 10- to 20-megabit fiber at them, but it’s just completely cost-prohibitive. We can’t justify spending \$1,000 a month for a circuit to an office with just a few employees.”

Another part of the problem was that the firm’s workforce is quite mobile. “Planners can be at a customer site or on a project, executives are always on the road, and many engineers want to work from home,” Klasna explains. “But trying to remotely download a set of project files and CAD drawings could take 60 minutes or more.”

JEO wanted to find a solution that could enable LAN-like application performance and file sharing, no matter where employees happened to be located.

In Brief

Challenges

- Accelerate access to large design files and project documents
- Provide LAN-like access to data and applications to employees working in small towns, at home, and on the road

Solution

- SteelHead appliances in data center and 10 offices
- SteelHead Mobile deployed on approximately 60 users’ laptops
- “Awesome” Riverbed technical support

Benefits

- Offices can be affordably located in small towns with limited bandwidth
- End users have LAN-like access to files and data from any location
- WAN optimization solution is easy for IT to manage

Solution: SteelHead appliances in the offices; SteelHead Mobile on laptops

JEO deployed Riverbed® SteelHead™ appliances in its data center and in the seven offices it had at the time, and immediately saw an improvement in application performance. “From the perspective of the end users, I would consider the performance LAN-like,” says Dix, who explains that users at the sites with limited bandwidth no longer have trouble opening large CAD and GIS drawings.

“SteelHead allows us to have power users in these small offices. We can put in a SteelHead appliance and get the benefits without the recurring bandwidth costs.”

Based on this success, JEO then became one of the first Riverbed customers to take advantage of SteelHead™ Mobile technology. The software was installed on the laptops of 30 employees, who saw similar performance improvements. For example, prior to having SteelHead Mobile, it took 60 minutes for one employee to download a 110-megabyte project folder on a home DSL connection. With SteelHead Mobile on his laptop, the transfer took only 1.5 minutes – 40X faster. In addition, mobile users are seeing as much as 75% less data going over their Internet connections.

“For us, the solution for the mobile worker started as a ‘nice-to-have.’ Shortly thereafter we realized it was a ‘must-have’ to enable our employees to work from everywhere,” Klasna recalls.

The company has since installed SteelHead appliances in all 10 of its offices, and SteelHead Mobile on the laptops of approximately 60 employees. Dix and Klasna have worked with Riverbed technical support over the years and have been completely satisfied. “It’s always been awesome,” says Dix. “I feel like I get to the right person when I make the initial call. And if I don’t, the response time is always acceptable.”

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Benefits: Application performance supports commitment to client satisfaction

Client satisfaction is the benchmark by which JEO measures its success. By that indication, the firm has been very successful, serving many of the same clients for 20, 40, and even 70 years. More than 80% of the firm's projects are repeat business. Because an important part of client satisfaction involves delivering on time, the SteelHead solutions are contributing to client satisfaction by improving the productivity of JEO's employees.

“Overall, Riverbed has managed to deliver both LAN-like performance to my users, no matter where they are, while making it easy for me to manage the whole system. That's a winning combination.”

“By optimizing the network traffic, SteelHead technology definitely plays a part in making us work more efficiently,” says Dix.

Another benefit of Steelhead WAN optimization is that JEO can have offices, and its employees can live, in small towns where bandwidth is limited. Employees in these locations have close to the same level of application performance they would get in the headquarters. “The standard is that they're able to work just as if they were in one of the larger offices that has 100-megabit fiber to the data center,” Dix notes.

“SteelHead allows us to have power users in these small offices,” Dix adds. “Without SteelHead, they might get by for a day or so, but they wouldn't be able to work there full time. So this technology has allowed us to let employees work in different areas where we just don't have the needed bandwidth. We can put in a SteelHead appliance and get the benefits without the recurring bandwidth costs.”

Another thing Dix values about the SteelHead solution is that in addition to directly benefiting JEO's mission, it is something he doesn't have to worry about. “It doesn't take a whole lot of effort for us to administer,” he says. “It's been nice working with it just from that perspective. SteelHeads just run, and in IT you can't necessarily say that about everything you deploy.”

Klasna sums up the firm's experience with Riverbed this way: “Overall, Riverbed has managed to deliver both LAN-like performance to my users, no matter where they are, while making it easy for me to manage the whole system. That's a winning combination.”

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Summary

JEO Consulting relies on its WAN to deliver business-critical applications from its Omaha data center to its regional offices. The firm needed wanted LAN-like application performance and file sharing for all employees, even those working in small towns and at job sites.

The firm installed SteelHead appliances in its data center and all 10 of its offices, and SteelHead Mobile on the laptops of approximately 60 employees. The resulting improvement in application performance has increased productivity and supports the firm's commitment to client satisfaction. The SteelHead solution also lets JEO locate offices in small towns with limited bandwidth, and ensures that everyone has LAN-like access to files and data from any location. An additional benefit of the Riverbed solution is that it is reliable and easy to manage.

About Riverbed

Riverbed, at more than \$1 billion in annual revenue, is the leader in application performance infrastructure, delivering the most complete platform for the hybrid enterprise to ensure applications perform as expected, data is always available when needed, and performance issues can be proactively detected and resolved before impacting business performance. Riverbed enables hybrid enterprises to transform application performance into a competitive advantage by maximizing employee productivity and leveraging IT to create new forms of operational agility. Riverbed's 25,000+ customers include 97% of both the *Fortune 100* and the *Forbes Global 100*. Learn more at Riverbed.com

The Riverbed logo consists of the word "riverbed" in a lowercase, bold, orange sans-serif font.