

EXPAND HELPS ALLSEAS APPLICATIONS SAIL SMOOTHLY

IN SUMMARY

- Expand is a scalable solution
- Easy to manage
- Successful file compression and WAN acceleration
- Big performance increase for Oracle EAM
- Helps implement a standardised and centralised infrastructure
- Application start-up runs one third faster than in the previous setting

PROFILE

The Swiss based Allseas Group is one of the largest offshore subsea construction companies in the world. Since 1986, the organization has completed more than 200 offshore pipe-laying and trenching contracts for oil and gas companies. The total length of pipeline installed to date is over 12,900 km; the total length of pipeline trenched is over 3200 km. The scope of the projects range from straightforward offshore pipeline installation projects to contracts involving design, installation, engineering, procurement, fabrication and large subcontracted works including diving, dredging, rock dumping and landfalls.

Spanning the globe with six ships and seven offices on three continents – North America, Australia and Europe - Allseas employs over 2,000 service and support staff. Delft in the Netherlands hosts Allseas Engineering, which provides project management and engineering services to other subsidiaries of the Allseas Group. These services include all IT related work.

THE CHALLENGES

The Allseas Engineering IT department services seven offices via leased lines and SDSL connections and six ships via satellite connections through vSAT. Limited bandwidth was available to provide the ships with internet and application access. “We had a 128 Kb satellite connection for our voice and data traffic and with ten people on the phone at the same time, we ran out of bandwidth,” says René Holland, Department Head IT at Allseas Engineering. This was quite frustrating for the crews aboard the ships and it



We have seen a performance increase when starting up applications. This runs one third faster than before the installation of the Expand Accelerators.

- René Holland, Department Head IT, Allseas Engineering

became a bigger challenge after the web/java based application Oracle Enterprise Asset Management (EAM) was implemented. EAM is used to track the resources needed for maintenance of the ships and is therefore crucial to both the engineers on board and the purchasing department at the Delft office. Every time a java based application is started it

THE FUTURE

With the standard infrastructure in place, Holland is now aiming to tweak the way the Expand Accelerators conduct the WAN optimisation. "The people on board the ships expect more and more services, including facilities like internet cafés. Therefore we need to have a more granular view of all the protocols that run over the line. This will help us to configure the appliances in such a way that we can impact traffic on the highest layers in the OSI-model, meaning we can stop certain traffic from running over the line and prioritise other traffic."

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requires six megabytes of bandwidth and also the application itself puts a lot of pressure on the connection which resulted in the poor performance the Oracle EAM application which was not acceptable for the users on the ships.

THE SOLUTION

It was apparent that Allseas needed a structural solution to make the maximum use of the available bandwidth, but Holland had to establish the business case, by first monitoring the network traffic to and from the ships in order to define the bottleneck. A network solution had been installed prior to Holland joining Allseas, but it couldn't deliver and it was subsequently decommissioned.

"We were looking for a scalable product which would not only optimize our WAN-traffic, but which would also give us insight into the type and amount of traffic to increase our insights and control," says Holland.

All Seas found Expand Networks following desktop research by René Holland, who, discovered many positive articles on the success of Expand products in overcoming application latency issues over satellite links including the US Navy amongst others. "This customer reference was the catalyst which led me to contact Expand." Together with Expand partner Infor IT, Allseas ran a production test where Expand Accelerators were installed at the central location and in the Switzerland office via two Mbit SDSL. Also an Expand unit was placed on the company ships Solitair and Tog Mor. The monitoring results supported René Holland in his conclusion was that too little bandwidth was available on the ships to get acceptable performance from the Oracle application and for overall satellite communications.

After the test was successfully completed and Holland had established his case regarding the bandwidth limitations to Allseas' Management, the company purchased one Expand Accelerator 6940 at the main location in Nieuwegein in the Netherlands and sixteen Accelerator 4920's for the remote locations. The roll-out of the appliances on both the ships and the remote offices, again with Infor IT, was completed in phases. Besides the more efficient use of the – increased – bandwidth via satellite communications, Allseas has seen a performance increase when starting up applications, which run one third faster than in the previous situation. "And we are especially happy that business critical applications, including Oracle EAM, now perform at an acceptable level for our users on the ships."

THE RESULTS

Within one year of deciding to implement Expand Networks, Allseas has been able to determine that too little bandwidth was available at the ships to provide an acceptable network connection. At the same time a non-performing yet business critical application finally could be put to use three years after it was purchased.