Preparing for “TV Everywhere”

Cisco medianet increases capacity and QoS control for Scripps Networks.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: Scripps Networks Interactive

Industry: Media

Location: Headquarters in Knoxville, Tennessee, with production or sales offices in nine other cities

Number of Employees: 2,500

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

- Changes in TV industry distribution models and consumer demand
- Rapidly rising volume of video and other media outstripping processing power of network routers
- Proliferation of internal uses of rich-media devices and applications requiring QoS controls, management

NETWORK SOLUTION

- Cisco medianet solution based on Cisco Aggregation Services Routers (ASRs) with embedded QoS and other network management tools

BUSINESS RESULTS

- Network prepared to meet needs for a “TV-everywhere” model of broadcasting rich media to anyone, anywhere, on any device
- Transition to broad internal use of videoconferencing, collaboration, training, and other media-based applications

CHANNELS/INTEGRATOR PARTNER

- World Wide Technology

Business Challenge

As the developed nations of the world move inexorably toward ubiquitous video, media enterprises will need a network that can do double or even triple duty. Scripps Networks Interactive has started to build a network as scalable as it is powerful.

A leader in lifestyle media and entertainment, Scripps Networks Interactive owns such brands as Home and Garden Television (HGTV), the DIY Network and the Food Network, the Cooking Channel and the Travel Channel, and Great American Country, all of which offer full-time television programming as well as broad, high-traffic websites. The company maintains a production studio in Nashville, Tennessee, and a combined production studio and sales office in New York City. In addition, the company has sales offices in Atlanta, Chicago, Cincinnati, Dallas, Detroit, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Knoxville, Tennessee, where the firm’s headquarters, IT group, and two data centers are also located.

As the company started to shift from a videotape-based workflow system for producing and transporting programs to a digital file-based system, the network connecting its sites was sagging under a rapidly growing workload, and more was to come. “The amount of video flowing over our network has been increasing at exponential rates,” says Scripps director of telecommunications Jason Norton. “In addition to file-based video production and transport, we’re also migrating to video to the desktop for communication and collaboration, as part of our unified communications strategy.”

That’s why, in 2011, Norton and his colleagues started to upgrade the company’s network connections to Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS) Metro Ethernet circuits. But such “faster pipes,” as he calls them, were not all that was required.

Network Solution

“The goal was to triple our bandwidth,” says Norton. “But once we had the Metro Ethernet circuits in place, we found that our installed Cisco 7200 and 3245 routers didn’t have the throughput to take full advantage of them.”

In fact, the company’s routers were pushing against their thresholds at just one-third of the capacity of Metro Ethernet. “Clearly, we needed to increase the capacity of our infrastructure,” says Norton. “We also wanted to

replace what we had with something we wouldn't outgrow. We wanted routers that would accommodate multiple adapters and additional circuits without any bandwidth limitations."

The solution they chose was the Cisco® 1000 Series Aggregation Services Routers (ASRs): the ASR 1004 for Scripps Networks Interactive' headquarters and ASR 1001s for the other nine sites. Norton and his colleagues looked at competitive solutions, he explains, but they chose Cisco ASRs for several reasons.

> "The volume of video people are consuming is growing. The ways they consume it are proliferating, and no matter what the channel, they expect the quality to be as good as cable. Our goal is to be ready to meet those demands. With our Cisco ASRs, we are."
> **— Jason Norton, Director of Telecommunications, Scripps Networks Interactive**

With a network built largely on Cisco equipment, the Scripps IT staff was already very familiar with Cisco technology, reliability, and support. "But the essential element that sold us on the Cisco 1000-series ASRs, in addition to their versatility and sheer horsepower, was the embedded quality of service (QoS) control they offer," says Norton.

QoS, a key feature of Cisco medianet solutions, automatically recognizes all the various types and requirements of files and devices in media-rich environments such as Scripps' and manages files, bandwidth allocation, and traffic priorities accordingly.

"Remember, we're building a network to do more than push our programming from one site to another," says Norton. "We're transporting all kinds of streaming media for all kinds of purposes, from training to video collaboration. We're starting to deploy video phones to the desktop. And all that is on top of our everyday data and business applications and voice.

"To deliver it all without compromise, with no choppy voice communications, no jittery video, we need comprehensive QoS control to differentiate, prioritize, and manage the many types of video and other media and data on the network."

Business Results

According to Norton, Scripps Networks Interactive is just starting to ramp up the volume of streaming media across its Cisco ASR-based network. But he can cite at least one performance metric that already gives him great confidence. "The new routers' central processing units are running at about 2 percent of their capacity," he says. "That's versus the 80 percent of capacity we saw with our old routers most of the time."

That leaves plenty of margin for future traffic growth on the company's media-rich network, and Norton makes it clear that the future is what Scripps is building its network for.

Although standard models of media distribution such as cable and satellite are still dominant, he explains, web-based models such as Netflix and Hulu represent the future of how consumers will consume TV and other media.

"The world is moving toward a 'TV everywhere' model. In our industry, that means you'll soon have to have your content in digital form and ready for distribution to anybody, anywhere, on any device," Norton says.

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At the same time, the people at Scripps Networks Interactive see a business transformation ahead that extends beyond the media industry. Video is “the next big thing” in organizations of all kinds, Norton and his colleagues believe, for training, distributed in-store, teleconferencing, collaboration, and more.

“Our medianet solution is there to serve our own needs as well as our customers’,” says Norton. “I expect to see more and more such media-rich, media-ready networks like ours in enterprises of all kinds.”

PRODUCT LIST

- Cisco 1001 and 1004 Series Aggregation Services Routers (ASRs)

For More Information

To find out more about Cisco Aggregation Services Routers, go to: http://www.cisco.com/go/asr.

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