

Case Study: Gigamon Solves Network Monitoring Tool Connectivity Problem for Large Financial Services Firm

Challenge

- Connect TAPs flexibly to a large number of network monitoring tools

Solution

- GigaVUE data access switch from Gigamon

Benefits

- Scalability to relieve port contention
- Flexibility to aggregate and distribute data as needed
- Streamline operation with hot-swap modules
- Connect and disconnect tools at will and still maintain compliance

“The GigaVUE 2404 uniquely solves virtually all of the challenges posed by the current monitoring tool environment. From accommodating legacy 1GigE tools in 10GigE environments, to controlling access to sensitive data, the GigaVUE 2404 is the kind of switch network engineers have been waiting for”

-Patrick Leong
Chief Technical Officer
Gigamon

One of the largest investment and insurance companies based in the United States, this firm serves millions of customers worldwide, including individuals, institutions, and businesses, through independent agents and brokers, financial institutions, and online.

Challenge

This organization maintains a large, complex, mission-critical network that requires constant monitoring for security, performance, and capacity. IT staff had deployed a wide variety of different network monitoring tools, including multiple instances of some tools to load-share traffic from higher-speed links.

In some cases, one tool needed to see traffic from multiple TAPs and, in other cases, multiple tools needed to see traffic from a single TAP. To provide access and aggregation of TAP traffic, the company deployed hardware from a physical layer matrix switch provider. Over time the number of monitoring tools grew to more than a dozen.

Eventually, the network and monitoring requirements expanded beyond the capabilities of the existing matrix switch. There was simply no way to connect all the TAP points to the tools. To serve the monitoring needs of the network security and operations groups, the company demanded a robust solution with more flexibility and scalability.

Solution

The firm searched the market and discovered the GigaVUE data access switch from Gigamon. GigaVUE streamlines the deployment and use of multiple network monitoring tools in data center networks, providing aggregation, replication, and filtering of critical network traffic. GigaVUE enables full network visibility to all categories of passive monitoring tools.

IT staff worked together with Gigamon to deploy the GigaVUE solution in their DMZ. Today they have 18 tools that monitor nine full-duplex links. Tools include two from Vontu, three from QRadar, three from Nixsun, four Intrusion Detection Systems, and two

Corporate Headquarters
736 South Hillview Dr.
Milpitas, CA ,95035
Tel: 408.263.2022
Fax 408.263.2023

www.gigamon.com



Sniffers. They also have traffic recorders for forensics and troubleshooting, a Resource Usage Monitor (RUM) Probe for customer experience, and Tealeaf for web experience monitoring—all flexibly connected through the GigaVUE.

Benefits

GigaVUE's stackable chassis provides nearly unlimited scalability, eliminating the port contention from mirrored or span ports when multiple tool connections are required. This was a key capability that had constrained the previous switch, which was limited to just eight Gigabit ports.

Equally important, unlike the typical data matrix switch, GigaVUE's aggregation capabilities allow it to retrieve critical data from several high-speed connections simultaneously and deliver specific traffic to a variety of centralized tools, rather than trying to coordinate data patterns from a multitude of distributed products.

A common practice in most data centers, "shopping cart" troubleshooting poses a serious security risk as well as a compliance issue. GigaVUE provides a highly secure solution that confines tools to a centralized location with controlled access. GigaVUE also enables flexibility in connecting and disconnecting tools in a production environment anytime, anywhere. This streamlines network operation by dramatically reducing the need for change management and scheduling maintenance windows.

With GigaVUE, this organization has been able to easily connect all the tools they need to effectively monitor their network, increasing operational efficiencies and better utilizing existing investments in legacy toolsets. Improved management capabilities have enhanced the end-user experience, reducing the need to deal with hundreds of probes on an individual basis throughout the network. And GigaVUE's robust, scalable solution ensures that future growth can be met, even as 10G traffic sources are added.

About Gigamon

Gigamon is the inventor and leading provider of Data-Access Switches. Its flagship product, GigaVUE®, can replicate packets from one span or TAP to many tools to solve the span port sharing problem. It also can aggregate and intelligently filter packets from many spans or TAPs to one or multiple tools to solve the problem of monitoring flows across complex mesh topologies and virtual networks. GigaVUE® facilitates unobtrusive parallel tool deployment with network-wide coverage, significantly reducing customers' capital budgets.

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