Midwestern Telco Tunes Up Customer Satisfaction
and Network Performance with Blue Coat Bandwidth Management Solution

Visibility, control and caching allow Twin Valley Telephone to enhance customer satisfaction while saving money.

Twin Valley Telephone (TVT), located in Miltonvale, Kansas, traces its origins back to 1900 when a founder established a telephone system to connect his home with his three rural ranches. Today, TVT is a regional telecommunications company providing telephone, high-speed Internet, and high-definition and digital television services. TVT’s network consists of almost 7,000 homes scattered across 2,400 square miles in north-central Kansas.

TVT tripled in size after a 2006 acquisition. The expansion led to an upgrade of the fiber network, enabling the provider to serve more customers. The expansion also enabled the provider to offer high-definition (HD) and digital television services as well as high-speed Internet.

However, like many regional and rural Internet service providers, TVT faced challenges around managing subscriber and traffic growth. The company’s Internet traffic had increased by 80 percent annually for the last three years, largely because of subscribers’ preference for rich Web 2.0 content, particularly streaming video and social networks. To accommodate subscribers’ insatiable media consumption, TVT needed to purchase more wholesale Internet bandwidth, driving up annual operational costs approximately 40 percent year over year for the last three years.

Caching and Control

To determine the best way to optimize and control network traffic, TVT turned to ISG Technology, an IT solutions provider. ISG recommended Blue Coat CacheFlow and Blue Coat PacketShaper appliances. After a proof-of-concept test, TVT quickly saw the tangible benefits of being able to manage its growing network traffic as well as having greater network visibility and control.

Blue Coat CacheFlow appliances allow TVT to save bandwidth by caching content on its network and closer to the users. CacheFlow appliances also accelerate the delivery of Web 2.0 and rich media, including large files and video content, which boosts the user experience.

With the Blue Coat solution, the ongoing effectiveness of caching is ensured even as the Web changes. Blue Coat CachePulse™ provides automatic, network-based updates for CacheFlow appliances. For example, TVT was able to benefit from a number of Netflix-specific CachePulse updates that were delivered during the evaluation period, which helped significantly increase caching efficiency for this very popular site.

While CacheFlow is focused on caching and addressing Port 80 and HTTP protocol traffic, the addition of a Blue Coat PacketShaper appliance gives TVT full visibility of all the traffic on its network. With PacketShaper, TVT can measure application performance as well as categorize and analyze traffic based on content.

TVT found that using a PacketShaper appliance to raise the performance of gaming applications had a direct positive impact on customer satisfaction. In fact, a number of customers reported they had noticed significant improvements in response times for World of Warcraft or networked games played on consoles like Microsoft Xbox or Sony PlayStation.
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- Scott Leitzel,
director of network operations

**Lower Costs and Higher Satisfaction**

By using CacheFlow appliances to optimize network performance and PacketShaper appliances to analyze usage and plan for growth, TVT is delivering a better user experience. Customer satisfaction increased immediately after the deployment. In addition, CacheFlow is helping TVT achieve long-term savings by reducing its bandwidth consumption. From TVT’s analysis, the return on investment on the Blue Coat CacheFlow is expected to be 24 months to 36 months.

“The Blue Coat Bandwidth Management Solution improved the user experience and lowered costs. Better customer satisfaction reduces turnover and creates loyalty,” said John Gunn, CEO of ISG.

“From a Twin Valley perspective, we felt confident that the Blue Coat solution was a good investment toward two key goals of continually improving customer experience and realizing operational savings through enhancements to our network,” said Scott Leitzel, director of network operations, Twin Valley Telephone. “As soon as the Blue Coat trial began, the Internet experience for our customers improved as evident by the unsolicited comments we received both in the community and during calls with our customers.”

“Our investment in the Blue Coat solution has also given us the tools to distribute content in a more efficient manner and to better analyze bandwidth consumption. This allows us to rightsize future purchases of wholesale bandwidth, driving down cost. We are fully committed to providing a quality Internet experience while being smart about how we do that. The Blue Coat solution makes this possible,” Leitzel concluded.

“The challenge of ever-increasing customer demand for rich Web 2.0 content like Netflix, Facebook and YouTube means that service providers will always need more bandwidth,” said Mark Freel, account manager, ISG. “Knowing what’s running across your network, and then being able to analyze that traffic, is crucial to providing the best service to subscribers. On the operational side, caching helps manage the out-of-control demand for bandwidth and better contain network costs.”