



Blue Coat PacketShaper
Resolving Bandwidth Issues
in the Games Industry



Exient Case Study

One of the world's leading independent video game developers, developing both original and contract titles on consoles, handheld devices and mobile platforms.

www.exient.com

"Blue Coat PacketShapers have provided the perfect solution. The simple ability to control bandwidth has enabled significant improvement to the way we work and collaborate, internally and with customers."

Nigel Clark, IT & Systems Manager

Executive Summary

Exient were experiencing serious performance issues, as users were fighting for bandwidth. Blue Coat PacketShaper gave complete visibility into bandwidth usage and allowed them to set application-level Quality of Service, resulting in vastly improved network experience and happy users.

Challenges

Over the last 10 years Exient has grown considerably, operating across three sites; Oxford, Leamington Spa and Malta. As a games developer, Exient relies on their Wide Area Network (WAN) so that teams can collaborate on projects that are both complex and

deliverable against tight deadlines. It must be always on and it must enable real-time interaction.

Game assets in modern games are so detailed that the resulting files are huge, which was causing congestion locally and on the connections between sites.

The problem was compounded as a number of staff could be playing online games simultaneously for R&D as well as the time zone difference between the UK and Malta.

Users were starting to fight for bandwidth and there was a risk that mission critical apps, including those that enable collaboration between teams and with customers, would grind to a halt.

“To stop our developers from playing the games that drive their creativity in favour of preserving bandwidth could damage our business as much as a poor performing network.”

Many organisations faced with similar bandwidth issues would simply issue a blanket ban on the use of data intensive applications such as multi-player games and media streaming.

However, in an environment where gaming is the business, such a move would hamper the passion and creativity of employees and ultimately be counterproductive. An alternative solution was required.

The Solution

Two options included the addition of a Proxy Server, which would add latency, or the purchase of additional bandwidth. However the most cost and operationally effective solution was to make better use of the existing bandwidth capacity.

Open Reality recommended using Blue Coat PacketShaper.

“The connections linking our three studios are vital. Delays and issues with bandwidth are not an option.

In addition to building the assets, the games had to be vigorously tested. At every element of a game’s lifecycle, user experience is everything and therefore so is bandwidth capacity.”

Results, Return on Investment and Future Plans

Three Blue Coat S200 Packet Shapers were installed which provided Exient with visibility of application and web traffic on their network, along with powerful application-level Quality of Service policy management.

With this intelligence they could configure bandwidth caps for disruptive applications and content, as well as being able to reserve bandwidth for business critical applications.

Exient now have a significantly more reliable network experience without needing to restrict access to the games and media that their employees enjoy.

Contact Us

Contact us today to find out how Blue Coat PacketShaper can help your organisation gain insight into bandwidth usage and guarantee application-level QoS.

