

University Federal CU Gets Up to Speed with Silver Peak WAN Acceleration

The road to Silver Peak started with a surprise. University Federal Credit Union (UFCU) of Austin, Texas had partnered with another institution to create a business continuity site. As part of its redundancy plan, UFCU moved its backup Symitar server to the new site. They began testing backups, Failover, and Remote Poster and found it was taking 12-15 hours to transfer a backup!

David Perego, UFCU's Host Services Team Lead, explained the problem. "We purchased a large-bandwidth circuit for this and other data transfers with a goal of 2-4 hours for the copy. But even with this circuit, latency and packet loss made that goal impossible."

The search for a solution

Perego went back to the drawing board. Many hours were spent researching, viewing product demos, and conferring with a Symitar representative. The institution considered doubling or even quadrupling its site-to-site bandwidth, but this was expensive and offered no assurance of resolving the problem. WAN acceleration solutions were examined, and Symitar suggested the use of two Silver Peak NX-7700 devices.

"The Symitar representative was great," Perego said. "There was never any pressure and he was very honest and straightforward. He knew we needed a solution and let the hardware speak for itself."

Silver Peak's appliances are standalone, sitting between network resources and the WAN infrastructure. They don't require a client, server, or any reconfiguring of applications. The NX-7700s are able to significantly reduce the amount of data transfer, mitigate the effect of packet loss, and to optimize all IP traffic to ensure minimal latency.

One of the primary technologies at work is one that provides "deduplication." The Silver Peak appliances track what data is being sent between local and remote devices. They ensure data which has already been received on the remote end is not delivered again. This can be an enormous bandwidth saver. The appliances also handle line conditioning, which reduces latency.

Visualize the speed

For UFCU, the benefit of these technologies was a game changer. Episys backup traffic to the recovery site was reduced by approximately 90 percent. The TAR (vault copy) backup transfer traffic from the recovery site back to UFCU shrank by more than 80 percent. The institution also saw latency reduced from an average of 500 milliseconds down to five or six.

Institution
University Federal
Credit Union

Location
Austin, Texas

Website
www.ufcu.org

Assets
\$1.3 billion

Members
131,000

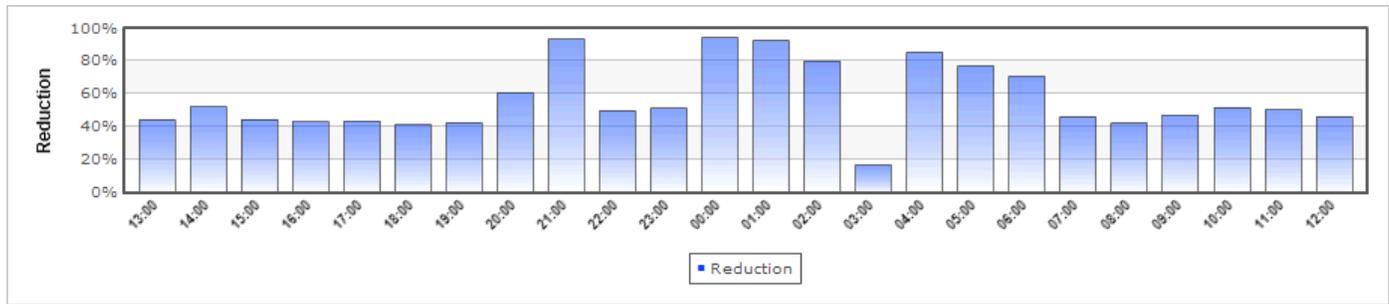
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**Symitar Software
Solutions & Services**

Episys®
Silver Peak WAN
Acceleration

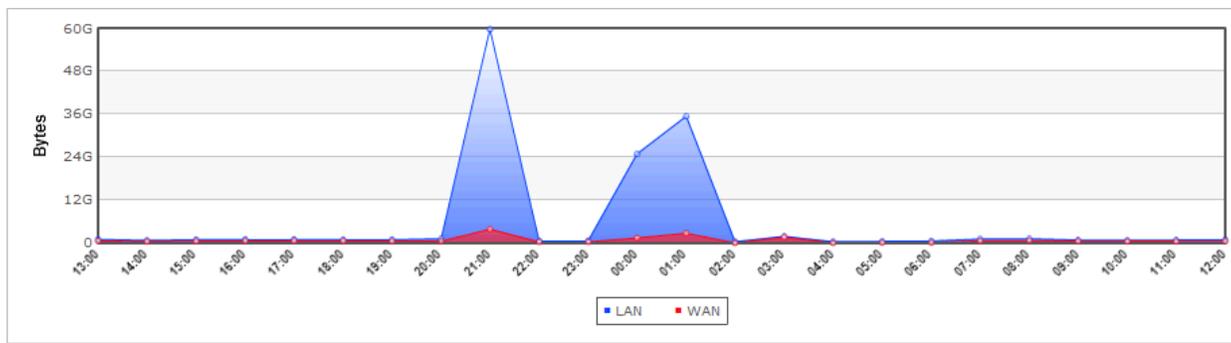


Traffic reduction (traffic is measured in megabits per second)



Not surprisingly, data compression ratios grew significantly. It's revealing to see the details of the effect of deduplication on backup data to the recovery site. As seen in this graph, the entire database is 60 GB, but only about 5 GBs is being transmitted during the backup. This is the result of deduplication technology streamlining the data flow.

Data transfer reduction



The bottom line came to this: disk backups that had been taking more than 12 hours were now happening in 25-35 minutes. TAR backup transfers were taking only 45 minutes.

Commenting on the change, Perego said, "We were amazed we could copy data to our business continuance site as fast, or sometimes faster, than we could copy data to the server physically next to the source device." Based on current bandwidth usage costs, Perego estimates that the Silver Peak appliances will pay for themselves in approximately 24 months.

Weighing the risks

Every institution has to make a choice about how to deal with potential disaster. "There is definitely a cost associated with business continuance," Perego said. "You can either spend the money up front and be covered from negative member impact, or you can spend the money after the disaster and risk losing trust with your membership and possibly their relationships."

With Silver Peak, UFCU is backing up to a remote site as quickly and easily as a local backup. It's hard to measure the value of the peace of mind that comes with that knowledge.



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