



Leading UK law firm accelerates application performance on public IaaS to enhance productivity and client services

Farrer & Co delivers the highest quality of user experience for cloud applications with Unity EdgeConnect

Not many law firms in the world can boast they had Charles Dickens as a client. Or how about the British Royal Family? Farrer & Co can claim both.

With client relationships that, in some cases, go back centuries, Farrers is one of the longest established and most respected law firms in the United Kingdom—and the world. While steeped in history and rich traditions of the law, Farrers is also a leading innovator in the industry, embracing technology in ways others can only follow. Case in point: The

firm moved its entire IT infrastructure from its own private data center into Microsoft Azure—a rarity in the legal profession—transforming how the applications and resources supporting its services are managed and delivered.

Neil Davison, Farrers' IT Director, remarks, "What enables us to stand out amongst other law firms is not just our high-quality legal advice, but the responsiveness of the services we deliver. That's linked directly to building long-term relationships—

FARRER&Co



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AVAILABLE
BANDWIDTH



INCREASED APP
PERFORMANCE
BY 60%



ASSURED
CONTINUOUS
WAN UPTIME

being a trusted advisor and delivering superb client service. Technology supports this, whether it's enabling 24/7 access to email or building a private online deal room to facilitate client access to case documents and financial reporting."



We didn't expect our effective bandwidth to increase as much as it did. That's a huge added benefit for us. Instead of needing to go out and upgrade our Azure connections in the next three or four years, we have plenty of headroom for growth right now with our existing 200 Mbps ExpressRoute circuits due to the network efficiencies gained from EdgeConnect and Boost.

— Neil Davison, IT Director, Farrer & Co

A solution for delivering the highest levels of application performance in the cloud

According to Davison, adopting a cloud-first strategy is central to delivering on 24/7 client expectations, scaling to support additional technologies like artificial intelligence, and assuring business continuity across multiple Azure Availability Zones. But equally important was ensuring reliable, high-performance access to cloud-hosted applications and data by lawyers and staff in Farrers' London offices. This includes applications such as Aderant practice management (PMS), LexisNexis InterAction client relationship management (CRM),

and BigHand digital dictation, as well as Microsoft SQL Server databases and other critical workloads.

Access to the cloud is provided across two Azure ExpressRoute circuits. The problem was when testing applications running in Azure, some did not perform as well as they did in the previous on-premises data center due to latency across the ExpressRoute circuits. "Lawyers record their time for everything," notes Davison, "and if something is slower, it's noticeable. It affects their ability to be efficient with their time, which is how most lawyers are appraised and rewarded. Therefore, it was absolutely critical that we address the application performance issues."



Having worked with technology partner, [SystemsUp](#), to deploy the Azure environment and ExpressRoute connectivity, Davison and his team consulted with them again on options to improve application performance. Very quickly, SystemsUp got back to the team, recommending the [Unity EdgeConnect™](#) SD-WAN edge platform as the right solution.

Andy Beech, Head of IT Systems at Farrers, recalls, "We were in the late testing stages when the performance issues came up, so we needed a solution that would just work and work quickly. Within a few days of installing the EdgeConnect appliances, all of our application performance issues were wiped out."

Davison adds, "We were amazed how quickly and with such little effort EdgeConnect was able to optimize our application traffic. It's a true plug-and-play solution."

Unified SD-WAN edge platform on premises and in the cloud

Farrers has deployed EdgeConnect appliances in each of its office buildings in London, along with virtual EdgeConnect appliances in its primary Azure cloud environment. An additional virtual EdgeConnect appliance is deployed in a secondary Azure environment for backup in the event the primary site becomes unavailable. Each EdgeConnect appliance is terminated with an Azure ExpressRoute circuit, which is comprised of dual 200 Mbps MPLS-based VPN connections. The EdgeConnect SD-WAN edge platform manages connectivity and automated sub-millisecond failover across both ExpressRoute circuits—across all connections—to ensure the highest levels of performance for Farrers' lawyers and staff connecting to the Azure cloud.

"The network configuration is seamless," says Beech. "With EdgeConnect managing the failovers, if there's any loss of a circuit, our end users are none the wiser."

In addition, Farrers uses the standard data encryption capabilities provided by EdgeConnect to ensure protection of confidential client information as it traverses across the ExpressRoute circuits. This eliminated the need for separate firewall appliances previously used for encryption, reducing complexity and simplifying administration at the WAN edge.

Boosts application performance out of the box

One of the most important capabilities the IT team implemented was the optional [Unity Boost™](#) WAN optimization performance pack, unified within the EdgeConnect platform. Beech reports that out of the box Boost delivered the WAN optimization needed across Farrers' application mix to increase performance dramatically.

"Since implementing Boost, we've seen application performance increases between 6 and 60 percent," Beech affirms. "We also tripled our available bandwidth from 200 to 600 Mbps through the data compression and deduplication provided by Boost. The compression is just staggering."

Davison is also impressed: "We didn't expect our effective bandwidth to increase as much as it did. That's a huge added benefit for us. Instead of needing to go out and upgrade our Azure connections in the next three or four years, we have plenty of headroom for growth right now with our existing 200 Mbps ExpressRoute circuits due to the network efficiencies gained from EdgeConnect and Boost."



Visible assurance that the network is performing

The EdgeConnect SD-WAN edge platform has provided Farrers' IT team with operational benefits as well, thanks to [Unity Orchestrator™](#) centralized management software.

"Orchestrator gives us a detailed view into the network that's better than any other monitoring tool we have," says Beech. "Straightaway you can see what's happening with your traffic—it's very comprehensive, yet easy to interpret. If we're troubleshooting a particular issue, it's straightforward to get to the root of it."

Davison concurs, "We can see the performance we're getting across the links with a measurable quality of service. It gives us comfort that we can rely on the infrastructure, so we can focus more on delivering services that benefit our lawyers and our clients. Ultimately, that's what Farrers is all about—providing outstanding service to our clients."

For more information on Silver Peak and our solutions, please visit: silver-peak.com

Customer

Farrer & Co is an independent law firm headquartered in London, England, serving individuals, families, businesses, financial services, educational and not-for-profit organizations. With a history that dates back more than 300 years to 1701, Farrers has provided legal counsel and services for many prominent historical figures, including Kings and Queens of England, Great Britain, and the United Kingdom. Today an international law firm, Farrers prides itself on providing sound legal advice to the most complex and varied challenges drawing upon in-depth knowledge, technical excellence, and diversity of disciplines. Ultimately what binds Farrers to its clients in long-standing relationships is a pragmatic, plain-speaking approach to the law and a steadfast commitment to winning and keeping its clients' trust.

Challenge

When moving its IT infrastructure into Microsoft Azure, Farrers discovered that some critical applications did not perform to expectations due to latency accessing the cloud. The firm needed to solve these performance issues to ensure reliable, high-performance access to applications for its lawyers to serve clients effectively and responsively.

Solution

Farrers deployed physical EdgeConnect appliances in its London office buildings, and virtual EdgeConnect appliances in the Azure cloud

environment. Each EdgeConnect appliance is terminated with an Azure ExpressRoute circuit comprised of dual MPLS-based VPN connections. Farrers also implemented the optional Boost WAN optimization performance pack, and manages the SD-WAN edge infrastructure through the Orchestrator management interface.

Results

- Eliminated application performance issues within days of deploying EdgeConnect
- Ensured uptime of network connectivity with sub-millisecond failover across multiple links
- Increased application performance by up to 60 percent
- Tripled available bandwidth from 200 to 600 Mbps
- Increased headroom for future growth, avoiding expense of upgrading MPLS circuits
- Simplified the WAN edge and streamlined network administration and troubleshooting
- Freed more time for IT to deliver services that benefit lawyers and their clients
- Enabled legal teams to focus solely on client service without network impediments



Company Address

Silver Peak Systems, Inc
2860 De La Cruz Blvd.
Santa Clara, CA 95050



Phone & Fax

Phone: +1 888 598 7325
Local: +1 408 935 1800



Online

Email: info@silver-peak.com
Website: www.silver-peak.com

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