



CASE STUDY

Company:

Managed Services Provider

Industry: Security services

Key Issues:

- Needed faster debugging/problem resolution
- Failed to meet SLAs and service disruption agreements
- Needed to reduce SLA penalties

Solutions:

- 2 NTO 5236 NPBs
- 20 Flex Taps

Results:

- Solution paid for itself with 167% ROI over 1 year
- Problem resolution now takes hours instead of days
- Saved \$50K by reducing SLA penalties
- Saved \$200K with a 4 to 1 reduction in performance monitoring appliances

VISIBILITY SOLUTION PAYS FOR ITSELF WITH 167% ROI

MANAGED SECURITY SERVICES PROVIDER USES VISIBILITY TO REDUCE SLA PENALTIES

This customer is a full-service business communications provider in North America and worldwide. They offer a managed-security service which consists primarily of firewall monitoring but also includes monitoring of broader unified threat management (UTM) deployments. UTM deployments can include intrusion prevention systems, Web application firewalls, and proxy servers—often a number of separate appliances in addition to traditional firewalls.

The provider enters into service-level agreements regarding the efficiency and quality of firewall throughput. Penalties associated with service disruptions are significant enough that the provider assigns staff to be on-call to troubleshoot issues as they arise. According to the network manager: “Before we deployed the Ixia solution, we were collecting TCP dumps to UNIX boxes and using custom scripting to try and compare traffic on each side of the firewall. In many cases, inserting a Tap or SPAN (Switch Port Analyzer) during a network event would require a scheduled maintenance window. Ultimately, we took service penalty hits because it took a long time to identify and resolve the issue.”

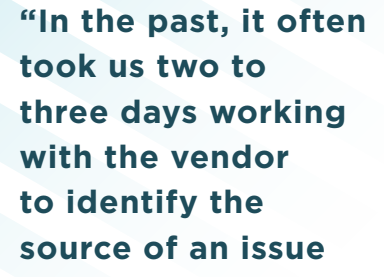
The provider deployed Ixia Flex Taps and GigaStor monitoring devices for capturing and analyzing the packet streams on both sides of each firewall. They also chose the Ixia Net Tool Optimizer® (NTO) 5236 network packet broker to provide connectivity for the monitoring tools. Without the NTO in place, they would have needed to purchase far more GigaStor packet monitors.

SECURITY FABRIC RESULTS IN A 75% DECREASE IN MTTR

The Ixia solution resulted in a number of positive financial returns. First of all, personnel can adjust monitoring configurations as needed without requiring change tickets and change board approval using the intuitive NTO console. The NTO's ability to do packet slicing is also an added bonus, since monitoring tools are not allowed to view/retain credit card numbers under Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) regulations.

The biggest payoff has been in terms of faster response time for fixing issues. Before deploying the solution, the team was missing critical outages and, due to packet drops, often did not have the data it needed for troubleshooting. When applied to a business-critical application, such as the e-commerce portal, minutes translated into big dollars lost (now saved). The new solution allowed them to reduce mean time to repair (MTTR) by 75%.

Deploying the NTO solution saved the organization the cost of purchasing more monitoring tools by aggregating low-speed links and making sure that all of the monitoring tools had proper data access. This extended the life of existing monitoring tools. The NTO also helped to troubleshoot the monitoring tools themselves, allowing the team to recognize and prove to one monitoring solution vendor that their product was dropping packets.



“In the past, it often took us two to three days working with the vendor to identify the source of an issue and implement a code patch,” said the manager. “We have reduced that time from days to hours. Penalties from problems with the services have run as high as \$100,000 for a single event, and we hope to save half of those charges with the new approach.”

— Network Manager,
Services Provider

ABOUT IXIA

Ixia provides testing, visibility, and security solutions, strengthening physical and virtual network elements for enterprises, governments, service providers, and network equipment manufacturers.

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