Aerospace Giant Gains Visibility Into Growing Network

New monitoring architecture is more proactive, identifies issues quicker and lowers costs

Summary

Customer: Fortune 50 Enterprise

Industry: Aerospace Manufacturing

Location: USA (global locations)

Challenge:
- Reactive mobile cart approach
- Delayed resolution times
- Dependent on local staff availability
- Constant outside security attacks

Solution:
- IntellaFlex XR Network Monitoring
- Architected for remote management

Benefits:
- Proactive complete network visibility
- Improved time to resolution
- Expanded visibility at lower costs
- Scalability and enterprise reliability
- Remote monitor and diagnostics does not require onsite staff

One of the world's leading manufacturers of commercial jetliners and military aircraft had monitoring tools in 10 data centers around the globe, but it didn't have the complete visibility into the network traffic that it needed to maximize its investment in those tools.

The manufacturer had two specific needs:

- **Reactive troubleshooting** — The company needed to be able to remotely connect to a suspected problem area in one of its data centers and sniff out what might be wrong.

  The way the company had been handling troubleshooting before was inefficient, requiring mobile hardware and boots on the ground. When a problem would arise at a remote location, someone from the IT staff would roll the crash cart out to the suspected location of the problem, plug in and hope to identify the network issue or, at least, recreate it. This approach required two things that the company wanted to change: staffing the remote location and then a guessing game to find the cause of network problems.

- **Proactive monitoring** — The company needed real-time, 100-percent visibility into network traffic for security monitoring.

  Being a manufacturer of airplanes for both some of the world's largest airlines and the world's biggest militaries, this company has some serious intellectual property. Serious intellectual property can make you a big target, and this manufacturer was just that. Hackers from around the globe were constantly bombarding its data centers, and the company's security tools needed full visibility to identify all these attempted breaches.

The crash cart was a reactive guessing game.

To get both the troubleshooting and monitoring it needed, this manufacturer had to invest in not just tools, but a network monitoring architecture that allowed those tools to function optimally. Ultimately, the company selected APCON intelligent network monitoring systems.

Providing Visibility

This airplane manufacturer made its decision to use IntellaFlex XR Network Monitoring Systems for three reasons:

- **Ease of use** — With data centers located across the United States, the ability to easily manage its monitoring switches remotely was critical. APCON's easy-to-use web-based interface gave the company that ability. It allows users to build, save, view and recall device connections between SPANs/Taps and monitoring tools using intuitive, Visio-like diagrams.

  A global view screen offers drag-and-drop functionality for managing connections and organizing diagrams and an enhanced status screen offers more details about system health. And for the engineers more comfortable working in common scripting languages, they can do that with the command line interface.

- **High availability** — Enterprises can't tolerate an outage of any length, and this company was no exception. That's why IntellaFlex XR redundant controllers were appealing. They provide hitless failover, so if a controller fails there is no effect on network performance. Failover operation is seamless, and an alert is sent to report the failure.

  It's not just controllers, though. Standard APCON features include redundant and hot-swappable power supplies and fans. Software, blades and common equipment are compatible across all IntellaFlex XR chassis, significantly simplifying operations, part sparing and investment protection.

- **Scalability** — The company wanted a system that was able to grow as it grew. APCON's blade-based chassis system can do just that. With APCON, adding more ports is as simple as plugging an additional blade into the chassis. Other manufacturers would require the purchase of another blade and another chassis and then trunking separate systems together.

Maximizing Potential

The insights monitoring tools can provide are invaluable. But without the infrastructure needed to get those tools the data they need in the way they prefer to see it, they aren't being used to their full potential. For this manufacturer, APCON provided that infrastructure, and the results are impressive.

In addition to allowing the company to get full network visibility to the existing monitoring tool inventory, preserving that investment, the company also saw two other specific benefits.

- **It reduced its monitoring budget by approximately 50 percent.** APCON's highly scalable system increases tool efficiency and allows the company to pay as it grows. They were able to monitor more data with the same tools, and when the network grows they can increase ports modularly.

- **It can resolve network problems faster without the expense of travelling to the data center.** Instead of rolling a crash cart through the data center and plugging it into a patch panel, all of the diagnostic work and troubleshooting is completed through an easy-to-use GUI that can be set up once, even from home.

  All of it is remote controlled. Instead of having an engineer drive or fly somewhere, and losing a half day or more of that person's productivity, problems can now be resolved in minutes. That kind of quick resolution potentially saves the company thousands of dollars in lost service.

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