

Vintacom: Juniper Networks Helps Trim Bandwidth Costs for Online Personal Ad Sites

**Business:**

- Canada-based group of online personal ad Web sites

Problem:

- Bandwidth expense grew uncontrollably, as site traffic increased

Key Benefits:

- Decreased bandwidth usage from 40 Mbps to 30 Mbps
- Accelerated page download times, especially for dial-up users
- Appliance deployed in only half an hour
- Straightforward, enterprise-class management

Vintacom Media Groups' bandwidth usage was going through the roof. The Canadian software development firm, which owns and operates successful Web sites for online personal advertisements, was watching its bandwidth costs soar as its consumer sites – DreamMates.com and SingleMe.com – attracted growing numbers of users. DreamMates.com and SingleMe.com are part of the Relationship Exchange, created by Vintacom in 2001 as a business-to-business site providing revenue-shared hosting for additional third-party dating sites such as American Greetings' SpecialSomeone.com.

Collectively, the sites that make up the Relationship Exchange have more than three million active members. Traffic typically peaks on Mondays, when users return from the weekend and respond to emails they have received.

"Our bandwidth costs were climbing," recalled Terry Schultz, Vintacom's chief information officer. "We had contracted for a specific level of bandwidth from our main provider, MCI, and we didn't want to incur extra charges for exceeding that level. But our servers were dishing out Web pages at increasing rates, and we were looking for any way at all to lower costs."

Schultz and his team first went looking for a solution more than a year earlier, but then signed an agreement with MCI for what seemed like plenty of bandwidth, so the search was put on hold.

But a year later, bandwidth usage was still climbing, and the need again became critical. The company's primary requirement, Schultz said, was for a product that would compress the huge amounts of data being transferred over the Internet to and from users at the various Relationship Exchange sites.

Vintacom chose a Juniper Networks DX™ 2200 application acceleration platform – "one of the very few products that were capable of handling the level of traffic we have," Schultz said. The DX 2200 multifunction application front end appliance is designed to accelerate and secure Web-site performance, as well as to improve server capacity and bandwidth usage. The appliance performs compression of all non-image data, Layer 4-7 load balancing, Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) connection management, response buffering, secure sockets layer (SSL) processing, and other functions.

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Terry Schultz
CIO

Vintacom Media Group

The DX 2200 platform was deployed on the Vintacom network between the company's server load balancers and a bank of about 20 Web servers (running Macromedia ColdFusion and Microsoft IIS). Though the Juniper Networks product performs load balancing, Vintacom decided to keep its existing SLBs in place to minimize network disruption and avoid reconfiguration.

After deploying the DX unit, Schultz said, his team immediately noticed the difference in bandwidth usage – a decrease of at least 25 percent. "One of our technicians had been monitoring our bandwidth levels when the Juniper Networks box was introduced, and he started to panic because usage dropped so fast he thought something was wrong with our network."

In a recent 51-day period, the Vintacom group of Web sites handled 685.5 million page requests from over two million unique user IP addresses.

"We're now at a 30-megabit-per-second bandwidth usage level," he said. "If we didn't have the Juniper Networks DX unit, we would be hitting at least 40 Mb. We're saving thousands of

dollars a month. And in January, when we signed a new contract with MCI, we were able to keep the same bandwidth level, even though our traffic had increased considerably.

"The Juniper Networks DX box has also improved page download times, especially for dial-up users, who constitute 40 to 50 percent of our user base."

The DX 2200 platform allows Vintacom's IT staff to keep tabs on key metrics, such as the types of error codes being issued by servers, or the Web browsers that visitors to the sites are using most.

Schultz was also delighted with the installation and management of the Juniper Networks unit. "For an enterprise-class product, it's very straightforward to use, and one of the easiest products I've ever set up," he said. "It didn't take even a half hour to get the box up and running – it was almost too good to be true."



**CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS
AND SALES HEADQUARTERS
FOR NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA**

Juniper Networks, Inc.
1194 North Mathilda Avenue
Sunnyvale, CA 94089 USA
Phone: 888-JUNIPER (888-586-4737)
or 408-745-2000
Fax: 408-745-2100

www.juniper.net

EAST COAST OFFICE

Juniper Networks, Inc.
10 Technology Park Drive
Westford, MA 01886-3146 USA
Phone: 978-589-5800
Fax: 978-589-0800

**ASIA PACIFIC REGIONAL
SALES HEADQUARTERS**

Juniper Networks (Hong Kong) Ltd.
Suite 2507-11, Asia Pacific Finance Tower
Citibank Plaza, 3 Garden Road
Central, Hong Kong
Phone: 852-2332-3636
Fax: 852-2574-7803

**EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST, AFRICA
REGIONAL SALES HEADQUARTERS**

Juniper Networks (UK) Limited
Juniper House
Guildford Road
Leatherhead
Surrey, KT22 9JH, U. K.
Phone: 44(0)-1372-385500
Fax: 44(0)-1372-385501