ConnetU Metro Ethernet Network

Scale, reliability and performance delivered across the city

"Shortest Path Bridging has allowed us to quickly and reliably distribute customer networks across the metro WAN like no other technology has."

Charles Lyons, Operations Director, ConnetU and Gwhizz Networks

ConnetU is a London network service provider which, under its Gwhizz Networks brand, offers Gigabit+ IP and Ethernet connectivity between offices, shops, homes, data centres and cloud on-ramps, as well as network consultancy services and wholesale access to other ISPs. ConnetU needs uncompromising uptime, with a scalable business model, to support ongoing growth.

CHALLENGES

Existing solutions from other vendors were reaching scalability limits. Port capacity and density were insufficient, with a shortage of 10GE+ interfaces. As the number of customers' virtual circuits grew, random traffic-stopping bugs were appearing in vendors' complex MPLS implementations.

Larger boxes from the same vendors were commercially available but expensive, with no guarantee that software bugs would desist. Furthermore, with an increasingly complicated network topology, the incumbent fabric demanded manual map pathing to ensure traffic was taking sensible routes with path protection in place. In short, as network scale and complexity grew, the current systems were becoming unmanageable.

Alongside these technical issues, ConnetU was unhappy with their previous network equipment supplier's response to the traffic-stopping bugs, and they were increasing prices at the same time.

ACTION

With the deployment of a new larger metro network, port density has increased in the same physical space, matching customer demands for 10-fold increases in port capacities, without significantly higher power consumption.

Deployment times, upgrade maintenance windows and human error have all decreased markedly due to a simple Shortest Path Bridging (SPB) fabric that is truly plug-and-play with only a few lines of configuration on each node.

Since deployment, there have been zero traffic-forwarding faults, and convergence times are predictably low, so that network faults are invisible to end customers. The solution has scaled as demanded, with ongoing quarterly growth, and is now deployed as a single SPB-powered fabric all the way across the London wide area metro.

PRODUCTS AND SOLUTIONS

Alcatel-Lucent OmniVista® 2500 Network Management System
Alcatel-Lucent OmniSwitch® 6450 (Edge) and 6860 (Core)
Alcatel-Lucent OmniAccess® Stellar AP1201 and Stellar AP1221

RESULTS

Technical benefits

- OmniSwitches deliver highly scalable wire-speed throughput with minimal configuration
- Easy to add, remove and upgrade network nodes
- Compact, high performance, lower power "pizza box" switches which can also stack for scalability
- SPB Ethernet fabric for tunnelling customer layer 2 traffic, with layer 3 IP routing

Financial benefits

- Cost predictability with long-term pricing framework agreement
- Short Path Bridging capabilities to improve routing with lower Total Cost of Ownership

User experience benefits

- Simple to manage and configure – from unboxing to production metro Ethernet switch in 30 minutes
- Scalability without disruption
- Unnoticeably fast convergence times to work around any network faults
- A sensible range of different switch models and port densities to suit all current use case scenarios

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Customer Story

MARKET: SERVICES
DEAL IMPLEMENTED: 2019
COUNTRY: UNITED KINGDOM
NUMBER OF USERS: 1000s
COMPANY: CONNETU