



BERENDSEN



Berendsen shines a light into Gamma network with Highlight

Berendsen, a world leading textile and laundry provider, is using Highlight's network and application monitoring service to deliver visibility into its managed network service supplied by Gamma.

The Highlight service is an integrated part of Gamma's managed voice and data network service. It allows both Berendsen and Gamma to have a shared and consolidated view into the behaviour of the network that serves Berendsen's 152 circuits with 52 laundries and an array of on-premise customer sites across the UK. Highlight's graphical view delivers insights into what might need upgrading, where misuse is happening and where there are issues that need to be fixed.

A proactive approach

Berendsen provides services for workwear, facilities, hospitality and healthcare end users in a wide range of sectors including high tech cleanrooms and up-market hotels. In October 2017, Berendsen doubled in size following its merge with Elis, the French laundry business. The combined group now manages the textile, hygiene and safety needs of over 300,000 customers in 30 countries worldwide.

Antony Pugh, IT Service Manager at Berendsen, manages the WAN services across all the company's UK sites and laundries: "When we started working with Gamma, a key requirement from the outset was to know what was happening within the circuits.

We had used a monitoring service through our previous provider for just an hour or two to investigate an isolated problem. It was completely re-active. With Gamma, we were keen to take a more proactive approach with better historical details to help with the analysis and sizing of the network.

Gamma has since helped us to upgrade from a basic DSL network to a more robust fibre network to cope with our expanding business. Our imperative is that data is reliable and instantaneous so that we can guarantee consistent IT services at all times across the business."



See clearly

Each Berendsen site in the UK now has two lines for redundancy, using both for maximum bandwidth. The most important traffic travels down the primary line with less critical traffic on the secondary. Citrix is used for 95 per cent of activities with thin clients connecting back to virtualised services at the company's head office in Basingstoke.

Gamma chose Highlight as the best option for its customers and its own network operations. Highlight is integrated into Gamma's automated ticketing system, enabling customers like Berendsen and Gamma's support staff to work closely as a team.

"Highlight has been perfectly set up and the graphical display enables us to see clearly when heavy internet use is causing spikes that impact other users. We can then make changes to class of service configurations to ensure non-priority and critical traffic are allocated correctly. For example, our increasing use of laptops meant some timed backups were taking place at peaks times and we were able to adjust them to quieter periods." Antony adds.



"Highlight is a valuable addition to the network and gives us a massive amount of visibility"

The network needs to cope with a number of projects underway that report on usage information across the laundry services. Machines capture details on the number of items washed per hour. Readers located at key points during the laundry process capture information from the RFID tags that are stitched into items. This allows Berendsen to track when items arrive on site, where they are in the process and when they are shipped back to the customer.

The RFID tags also carry details about the manufacturer, the item's age, when last seen, when washed and any repairs. This enables Berendsen to check if laundry is lasting its three-year lifecycle and to alert customers if items are not being circulated sufficiently.

Berendsen uses Highlight's service to see what traffic is flowing across the lines. *"I really like being able to identify individual devices and see if ports are being used properly or perhaps identify if activity is for personal use. If one of the machines is not reporting, we can check the network to identify exactly what is going on. At one site, we discovered someone was watching Netflix for a considerable amount of time. Rather than block the application and punish light users who enjoy Netflix during their breaks, we were able to inform the local manager."*

Highlight's AppVis is another key tool that filters application performance information, so Antony can focus on what is important. "I know that Citrix, printing and Microsoft Azure are the highest utilised applications across the network, so I don't need to constantly see this information," he confirms. "Instead I can concentrate on any usage spikes from valid applications as well as any increases in less desirable applications such as BitTorrent, Facebook or Netflix. I can then minimise abuse without penalising valid usage;

...this is only possible if I can see clearly what is happening through Highlight."



Investment justification

Antony explains that "Before Gamma and Highlight, we just didn't know if we had a problem. We couldn't see what was happening. Today, our IT services are faster, more stable and we know which lines are approaching 90% or 100% usage. With this information we can justify any further investment for increased bandwidth and it removes any perception that we are upgrading for the sake of it. I can prove that everything is being used as it should."

The proactive monitoring and alerting means Berendsen can now fix issues before they impact users or end customers. "If there is an issue, Highlight helps us to identify what we don't need to look at, so we can eliminate it from an investigation. We can then make small adjustments to ensure services are continually improving. I'm not always looking for the fastest, but I do insist on everything being consistent. Consistency of service is the key to happy users," confirms Antony.

"Most importantly, I really value the fact that both Gamma and our team at Berendsen are using the same insights from Highlight. This means Gamma takes a more consultative and advisory role compared to any of our previous providers. Our combined focus is now always on where improvements might need to be made to working practices or processes in order to optimise network usage. We are constantly thinking three and six months ahead as things in the business are moving at such a fast pace."

"We want to be ready for the future."

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