Greenbrier Fast Tracks IT and Business Operations with ExtraHop

THE GREENBRIER COMPANIES

"With ExtraHop, we're not spending time looking for a needle in a haystack. That means we can spend more time on projects that are strategically valuable to the business. It's a win-win."

— **Steve Eaton, IT Security Manager, The Greenbrier Companies**

COMPANY PROFILE

The Greenbrier Companies is one of leading designers, manufacturers, and marketers of railroad freight equipment and ocean-going marine barges in North America.

CHALLENGE

Geographically diverse manufacturing and service operations rely heavily on a centralized IT infrastructure, and delivery of critical applications over WAN and Citrix was often sluggish.

SOLUTION

By delivering correlated, cross-tier visibility across the entire IT stack, ExtraHop gave Greenbrier a one-stop source to identify and resolve problems quickly.

BENEFITS

• Slashed troubleshooting times from weeks to hours or minutes

• Improved cross-team collaboration

• Ensured more consistent performance of applications delivered over WAN and Citrix

• Time saved troubleshooting is now spent improving processes and performance

CHALLENGE

The Greenbrier Companies is one of North America's largest manufacturers and servicers of rail cars and ocean-going marine barges. The company has more than 12,000 employees in operations spread across five different countries – the United States, Canada, Mexico, Poland, and Brazil. Worldwide, they produce 5,500 rail cars per year, and demand is growing.

In order to keep pace, Greenbrier must run as efficiently as possible – not always an easy proposition with such geographically disparate operations. This challenge is particularly acute for Greenbrier's IT team. Most of the company's infrastructure and applications are run out of the corporate headquarters, but the IT team must still guarantee the performance and availability of those applications across its global operations.

Remote users frequently experienced latency on critical applications including parts and ERP systems, negatively impacting productivity and revenue. Unfortunately, the IT team had no way to know when and where users were experiencing problems, let alone where they were originating.

SOLUTION

Greenbrier needed a solution that would deliver the cross-tier, correlated visibility that would enable them to proactively identify performance problems, and quickly identify and troubleshoot the root cause of those problems before they impacted productivity. For that visibility, they turned to ExtraHop.

Keeping Citrix on the Rails

One of Greenbrier's most critical applications is delivered over Citrix to their field operations throughout North America. Prior to ExtraHop, the team at Greenbrier had limited insight into the performance and end-user experience of this application, let alone how the back-end services were impacting it.

In order to achieve this critical visibility, Greenbrier worked with the professional services team at ExtraHop to ensure that the correct traffic was directed to the appliance. The ExtraHop solutions architect then built a series of custom triggers to capture specific application and delivery metrics to help the IT team take a more proactive stance to ensure seamless application delivery and performance.

No more DNS "whistle stops" on this tour

When ExtraHop was first deployed at Greenbrier, the team was working to troubleshoot a PC performance problem that was impacting several hundred PCs across the network. Within minutes of establishing the data feed into the ExtraHop, the team at Greenbrier saw a slew of DNS requests across the network.

- **Slashed troubleshooting time from weeks to hours**
- **Accelerated cross-team collaboration**
- **Streamlined processes and performance**

"As it turned out, the PC build image we were using to do installs on a series of PCs included a static DNS host. Every PC that had that image was going out looking for a DNS host that no longer existed," said Steve Eaton, IT Security Manager at Greenbrier. "We were getting millions of invalid DNS requests across our networks, slowing things way down. Without ExtraHop, it might have taken days to pinpoint the source of the problem. We might never have found it."

BENEFITS

Fast-Tracked Insights

Prior to ExtraHop, troubleshooting often meant combing through device-by-device, layer-by-layer, until the source of the problem was identified – a time-consuming and frustrating process.

"Sometimes we'd work on a problem for days or weeks, only to have it suddenly disappear. We were left wondering if we'd ever even approached it from the right direction," says Eaton. "With ExtraHop, we've cut troubleshooting times in half, sometimes even more. And we're no longer left guessing. Now we know where problems are originating, which means we can prevent them from recurring in the future."

A Well-Oiled Machine

Because ExtraHop provides Greenbrier with visibility across all tiers of their environment – from the network to applications to virtual desktops – different groups within IT are now able to work more collaboratively to track down the origin of performance problems before they can derail operations at the company's remote manufacturing plants and services facilities.

In the situation involving the PC build images, the network and application teams were able to work with the helpdesk – the team responsible for PC builds – to identify the source of the problem and fix it quickly.

"Rather than wasting time pointing fingers and speculating about where the problem was originating, we were all able to look at the data, pinpoint the source of the issue, and get it resolved," says Eaton. "ExtraHop is the difference between guessing and knowing."

Full Speed Ahead

With ExtraHop, the IT team at Greenbrier can spend more time focusing on expanding and improving IT operations, rather than putting out fires. "We're not spending time looking for a needle in a haystack. That means we can spend more time on projects that are strategically valuable to the business. It's a win-win."

ABOUT EXTRAHOP NETWORKS

ExtraHop is the global leader in real-time wire data analytics. The ExtraHop platform analyzes all L2-L7 communications, including full bidirectional transactional payloads. This provides the correlated, cross-tier visibility essential for today's complex and dynamic IT environments. The ExtraHop platform scales up to 40 Gbps in a single appliance, deploys without agents, and delivers tangible value immediately upon deployment.

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