



The Seattle Times Company Reduces Time to Resolution with the ExtraHop Application Delivery Assurance System

The Seattle Times

The ExtraHop System Isolates Intermittent Performance Problems for Pacific Northwest Media Corporation

BENEFITS

- Pinpointed the root cause of intermittent connectivity issues
- Improved network performance by more than 80 percent for key content producers
- Improved employee productivity for all Internet-facing tasks
- Provided visibility into their VoIP traffic across the internal network for enhanced routing and capacity planning

“The ExtraHop Application Delivery Assurance system opened up the performance black box for us. We love the simple install and intuitive interface, but most importantly, the comprehensive metrics. It provides the visibility we need for tracking down even the toughest problems. ExtraHop delivers tremendous network management capabilities for an excellent return on investment.”

—Greg Crosby Network Services Manager,
The Seattle Times Company

Customer Profile

The Seattle Times Company publishes *The Seattle Times*, the largest daily newspaper in Washington State and the largest Sunday circulation newspaper in the Pacific Northwest. Well respected for its comprehensive local coverage and the winner of seven Pulitzer prizes, *The Seattle Times* also is recognized worldwide for in-depth, quality reporting and award-winning photography and design. More than 5 million unique visitors per month access The Seattle Times online network, which includes seattletimes.com, the flagship Web site, as well as our marketplace sites, [NWjobs](http://NWjobs.com), [NWautos](http://NWautos.com), [NWhomes](http://NWhomes.com) and [NWsource](http://NWsource.com).

Situation

The Seattle Times Company's Seattle headquarters supports hundreds of employees across news reporting, editing, operations, production, and other support functions. Their network consists of hundreds of devices including web and database servers, firewalls, routers, and storage systems. Content is pushed out to the Akamai Content Delivery Network. As news reporting and production become increasingly digitized, the content teams rely heavily on IT to enable the successful delivery of their core product, breaking news stories that are meaningful to the Pacific Northwest community.

Earlier this year, a prominent group of users, mainly content producers, started experiencing slow browsing behavior. The problem

seemed intermittent, varying from user to user and session to session. The prolonged delays started impacting productivity negatively, and IT needed a rapid resolution for these issues.

Solution

The ExtraHop Application Delivery Assurance system, the industry's first fully application-aware network performance management system, was brought on-site to investigate this enigmatic network behavior. After the rapid installation of the ExtraHop system, the Seattle Times team quickly honed in on some anomalous behavior in the TCP layer. The expired-connections metrics were unusually high and affected a significant percentage of all TCP traffic. Through sophisticated TCP metrics, the ExtraHop system presented a comprehensive view of network behavior and was able to pinpoint the problem as the firewall. A configuration problem caused the connection tracking state tables to exceed the limit, which directly led to expired connections and retries, consequently slowing down network performance intermittently for some Internet users.

With the help of ExtraHop, the Seattle Times team quickly rectified the firewall-configuration issues and eliminated the connectivity problem. Newsroom staffers now perform research and file stories unimpeded by browsing speeds.