UCAAS SERVICE ASSURANCE REQUIRES ROBUST SD-WANS

SEPTEMBER 19, 2018 BY ATCHISON FRAZER

Unified communications or collaboration solutions in the private network were supposed to relieve IT from the burden of manually assuring service-level quality by off-loading some of the peripheral applications workload to cloud-based managed services.

However, as voice application features advanced incorporating voice, video and interactive elements, quality suffered – digital voice and video-conferencing packets buffered, which were reasons why IT and MSPs ended up battling dramatic increases in service trouble tickets.

The problem, however, is not with the concept of UCaaS; it is more about the underlying connectivity solution that transports these applications. Legacy WAN architectures with their inherent drawbacks inhibit the performance and benefits of cloud-based collaboration solutions, hampering employee productivity and jeopardizing business continuity.

A Case of Cloud, Collaboration and a Bad Connection

As cloud and Infrastructure-as-a-Service platforms gained enterprise traction, UCaaS saw a commensurate increase in interest: enterprises needed a productivity and collaboration solution that would cater to the modern-day digital enterprise's geographically dispersed teams, 24/7. Collaboration solutions based on cloud and IaaS promised easy around-the-clock access, scale and simplicity.

Enterprises needed some respite from the obsolete, cost-intensive, difficult-to-expand legacy voice and messaging systems that many organizations had been struggling with for a decade or more. Cloud-based

services quickly replaced them with an integrated combination of web-based voice/messaging/video tools that enhance everything from uptime to customer experience to productivity.

But the caveat, as with many cloud-based systems, here is the underlying mode of connectivity. Traditional WAN architectures are rigid, expensive and often poorly suited to support the diverse set of cloud applications that most companies are running today. As a result, these organizations fall back on the public Internet for UCaaS connectivity. However, the reliance on the public Internet is problematic since direct Internet access by itself cannot prioritize traffic to mitigate congestion, jitter and packet loss – all which impact user experience and drain productivity.

Adding to the problem is the fact that the demands of present-day collaboration and productivity apps are more dynamic than before. Voice, video and multimedia flows are bandwidth intensive. The bottleneck at any typical branch office is determinant by the fact that rate-limited Internet bandwidth ends up being overs-subscribed to by multiple sources of inbound cloud-based services.

The result is often poor connectivity, significant delays, especially during periods of peak Internet usage or poor quality on voice-over-IP (VoIP) telephony calls, delays and other audio quality issues.

Cut the Cord. Switch to SD-WAN

Real time data like voice and video calls are different from FTP or UDP data because the margin of delay or accuracy that can be tolerated is minimal. Factors like latency or packet loss in connectivity can seriously impair the quality of real-time data as compared to standard e-mail or file transfers.

SD-WAN creates an “application experience driven” network that can actively manage how bandwidth is sourced and utilized, routing traffic to optimize how every application operates. SD-WAN delivers intelligent and dynamic path selection that focuses on the app performance/experience automating the movement of traffic across various paths per policy, which dictates how the app needs to perform. So, the network responds to ensure the app gets placed on the path that will best serve its criteria. SD-WAN’s dynamic management of bandwidth ensures that UCaaS gets prioritized in a way that guarantees call quality is excellent and issue-free. SD-WAN ensures that your call/video call quality is an asset to collaboration among teams rather than a hindrance and a reason for frustration.

Versa’s Secure Cloud IP platform architecture has been built to magnify and enhance the UCaaS experience. Versa’s SD-WAN solution packs in the flexibility, scalability and the ability to dynamically route traffic and optimize connections while keeping cost and complexity low. It can support native and third-party virtual service solutions, has an integrated security suite, line conditioning and UC-specific traffic steering optimization. Versa’s SD-WAN can enable application policy based on a mean opinion score (MOS) and its embedded codec support allows for real time MOS analysis.

Enterprise Unified Communications (UC) solutions are mission-critical to the enterprise’s ability for geographically distributed teams to collaborate effectively. For industry verticals like financial services, transportation and logistics, retail and manufacturing SD-WAN is the real game-changer for accelerating digital business transformation journeys.