When IT professionals in the REA Group began to build a 90 per cent virtualised private cloud to accommodate realestate.com.au, Australia’s leading web site for residential property, they chose a range of SolarWinds networking and application monitoring tools to help them. It was a critical project as the site attracts more than 20.4 million Visits a month. But SolarWinds’ solutions helped the IT team to meet their 99.99 per cent uptime target and have also empowered engineers to make better informed decisions by delivering new levels of transparency and enabling better systems access.

The SolarWinds solutions have given us better access and more transparency than ever before, as well as better access to the system. This empowers engineers to make decisions when they need to, based on what they are seeing on the monitors. Before, we pretty much relied on intuition.

CUSTOMER

REA Group Limited (ASX:REA) is a leading digital advertising business specialising in property. Listed on the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX) in 1999, the Group operates Australia’s No.1 residential and commercial property websites, realestate.com.au and realcommercial.com.au, as well as the market-leading Italian property site, casa.it, and other property sites and apps across Europe and Hong Kong. Further details about REA Group’s activities can be found at www.rea-group.com
CASE STUDY: SOLARWINDS HELPS REALESTATE.COM.AU TO MEET 99.99% UPTIME TARGETS

CHALLENGE
Having built its own private cloud, the IT team at realestate.com.au sought upgraded solutions to manage the availability and uptime of the corporate network, infrastructure, and applications. Previously they had used old versions of SolarWinds solutions, but these were three major versions behind latest technology and the team was unable to modify them easily.

“We wanted the latest and greatest versions that we could tailor build,” said Technology Services Manager, Damian Fasciani.

The technology they chose would be used for monitoring network equipment, as well as 40 virtual servers and 10 physical servers. The corporate environment is a mix of Windows, Linux and OSX. The network serves five offices, two physical data centres and two cloud data centres. There are 100-plus devices, including wireless access points.

Network uptime is critical because none of the infrastructure or servers are located within any of the offices.

“If the network were to go down, our business would come to a halt,” said Fasciani. “We have an uptime target of 99.99 per cent.”

SOLUTION
According to Fasciani, REA’s IT staff already knew that SolarWinds had some of the best monitoring and management products available. Also he and others had used SolarWinds products in previous jobs. So rather than initiate a time-consuming evaluation, the team went straight to SolarWinds solutions, based on their past experience with these.

The company had used other tools, including Nimsoft and Nagios, and they are in the process of de-commissioning Nagios. Fasciani said Nagios was comparable with SolarWinds in power, but SolarWinds was far easier to use and set up quickly, plus multiple SolarWinds solutions came out of the box with a single pane of glass view.

For systems management they selected SolarWinds Virtualisation Manager (VM), and Server and Applications Monitor (SAM); while for network management they selected SolarWinds Network Performance Monitor (NPM) and Network Configuration Manager (NCM). They added Web Performance Monitor (WPM) to ensure the health of their critical web site; IP Address Manager (IPAM) to simplify and monitor management of IP addresses; Syslog Server to receive process and alert logs from network devices and Windows events; and Mobile Admin for Agentless IT management and monitoring from any mobile device. Finally SolarWinds Enterprise Operations Console (EOC) gives at-a-glance insights into enterprise network performance.

Client Statistics
» 3 million web ‘hits’ per month
» 99.99% availability target
» 40 physical and 10 virtual servers
» Two physical and two cloud data centres
» 100-plus network devices
RESULTS

According to Fasciani, Network Performance Monitor produces a wealth of information, so much in fact that the IT team have added a widget to show only certain types of input. When they need to broaden the application’s scope, they simply click through to additional information.

He said, “NPM simplifies detection, diagnosis and resolution of network issues. It is good for learning network utilisation. By reporting problems such as packet loss, and by flagging issues so early, it allows us to be pro-active in fixing problems.”

NPM also tracks response time, availability and uptime of routers, switches and other SNMP-enabled devices. The solution also shows performance statistics in real time.

The realestate.com.au team use Network Configuration Monitor to back up all switch and router configurations, and have checked its ability to make configuration changes although they had not yet used this functionality.

According to Fasciani, NPM and NCM “do the job well, and most of their areas are fantastic”. He added, “We implemented SolarWinds Virtualisation Manager (VM) to monitor our VMware infrastructure in our private cloud, which previously we found difficult, but with VM its plug and play and reconfiguring it was easy and straightforward.”

Since the realestate.com.au web site represents the business's backbone, the IT team has made its continuing operation their top priority by supporting a 99.99 per cent network availability target. To achieve this they have multiple strategies and solutions in place. If a front end web server goes down, redundancy is such that it does not affect the overall performance.

Web optimisation is critical, so SolarWinds Web Performance Monitor (WPM) which continuously monitors end-user experience for each step of a web transaction, also plays a key role.

“Optimising the network, systems, web and applications (within our Hybrid Cloud) are all critical to the health of our business, and the SolarWinds' solutions combine to enable us to give us early warning of any developing problems,” said Fasciani. “Then our redundancy setup lets us drop a server out of the loop while we rectify the situation, usually before our users are even aware of it.”
CASE STUDY: SOLARWINDS HELPS REALSTATE.COM.AU TO MEET 99.99% UPTIME TARGETS

He concludes, “The SolarWinds solutions has contributed to our record of maintaining 99.99 per cent uptime by giving us better access and more transparency than ever before, as well as better access to the system. This empowers engineers to make decisions when they need to, based on what they are seeing on the monitors. Before, we pretty much relied on intuition.”

IT MANAGEMENT INSPIRED BY YOU.

SolarWinds provides powerful and affordable IT management software to customers worldwide, from Fortune 500® enterprises to small businesses, managed service providers (MSPs), government agencies, and educational institutions. We are committed to focusing exclusively on IT, MSP, and DevOps professionals, and strive to eliminate the complexity that our customers have been forced to accept from traditional enterprise software vendors. Regardless of where the IT asset or user sits, SolarWinds delivers products that are easy to find, buy, use, maintain, and scale while providing the power to address key areas of the infrastructure from on-premises to the cloud. This focus and commitment to excellence in end-to-end hybrid IT performance management has established SolarWinds as the worldwide leader in both network management software and MSP solutions, and is driving similar growth across the full spectrum of IT management software. Our solutions are rooted in our deep connection to our user base, which interacts in our THWACK® online community to solve problems, share technology and best practices, and directly participate in our product development process. Learn more today at www.solarwinds.com.

SOLARWINDS.COM.AU

APAC Headquarters: Level 21, Tower 2, 201 Sussex Street, Sydney, 2000 Australia
P: 1 800 090 386 | E: APACSales@solarwinds.com

TOLL FREE NUMBERS:
Singapore: +65 6593 7600
South China: 10800 265 2552
North China: 10800 650 0579
India: 000800 650 1572
Thailand: 001800 658 027
Vietnam: 120 65 118
Taiwan: 0080 165 2042

New Zealand: 0800 8850 17
Japan: 005 316 50 491
Malaysia: 1800 806 462
Hong Kong: 800 966 098
Indonesia: 00180 365 7996
Philippines: 1800 1651 0679

For additional information, please contact SolarWinds at 866.530.8100 or email sales@solarwinds.com. To locate an international reseller near you, visit http://www.solarwinds.com/partners/reseller_locator.aspx

© 2012 SolarWinds Worldwide, LLC. All rights reserved.

The SolarWinds, SolarWinds & Design, Orion, and THWACK trademarks are the exclusive property of SolarWinds Worldwide, LLC or its affiliates, are registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, and may be registered or pending registration in other countries. All other SolarWinds trademarks, service marks, and logos may be common law marks or are registered or pending registration. All other trademarks mentioned herein are used for identification purposes only and are trademarks of (and may be registered trademarks) of their respective companies.