

Network Redux Builds its Business on Force10 Switches

Customer PROFILE

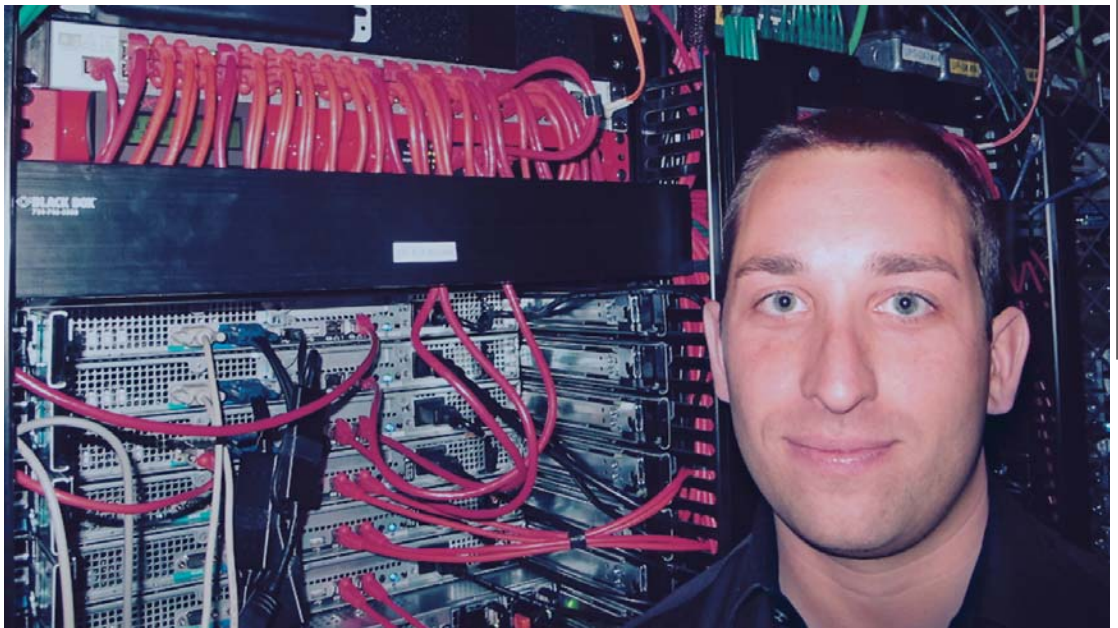
Customer
Network Redux

NETWORKREDUX

Industry
Web Hosting Provider

Application
Managed Web Services

Highlights
Network Redux uses the S50's built-in SNMP v3 support for general management, along with ACLs for administrative access and AAA authentication for granular control of specific devices among engineers.



Network Redux is a Managed Web Hosting provider based in Portland, Oregon. Founded in 2004, the company has grown rapidly in a hotly contested market by delivering a highly reliable network infrastructure and by providing top-quality service to its customers. Network Redux services run from hosting Virtual Servers for as little as \$50 per month to hosting entire Enterprise Platform clusters for as much as \$40,000 per month.

While it offers lower prices than its big-name competitors, Network Redux's secret weapon is the quality of service it delivers for its customers. Rather than simply maintaining racks of servers, switches and storage systems, the company functions as an outsourced IT department for its larger customers, doing everything from application migration to monitoring, patching, and scaling. This advantage has driven a ten-fold increase in data traveling through its four data centers in the past year, and has attracted more than 1300 customers in 40 countries. Customers include Webtrends, the Oregon Training Network, Adium and ImageMagick.

"Everything we support is infrastructure that we own, which gives us granular insight into our operations," says Thomas Brenneke, founder and president of Network Redux. "We spend a substantial amount of time monitoring and managing client applications. Reliable switching and routing infrastructure is an absolute necessity for these business-critical applications."

The Switch to Force10

Network Redux began as a Dell shop in 2004, using PowerEdge servers and PowerConnect switches. The PowerConnect switches provided functional Layer 2 services, however, as the business grew, Brenneke's team needed more intelligence in the network.

With a need to deploy ten more highly dense racks within a 12-month timeframe, Network Redux engineers went shopping for a Layer 2/Layer 3 access switching platform. When the company explained its needs to Dell, they were steered towards Force10 Networks.

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Founder and President
Network Redux

“I give a lot of credit to Dell because they knew their weakness in advanced switching technologies,” says Brenneke. “We tried deploying OSPF and VRRP on the Dell switches and we couldn’t build a stable platform.”

With due diligence, the Network Redux team issued RFPs to Force10 as well as to Foundry Networks and Cisco. Only Force10 sent a sales engineer to the Portland offices to discuss Network Redux’s specific needs. This level of personalized service mirrored Network Redux’s own philosophy of doing business, so the company selected four Force10 S50 access switches with redundant power supplies for the project.

“We went with the S50 because we needed the port density and Layer 3 support, giving us access to OSPF, BGP, and VRRP,” says Brenneke. “We use OSPF and VRRP heavily, and we didn’t need the bigger backplane for our top-of-the-cabinet switches.”

Scaling up

During deployment, the Force10 sales engineer was on site to show Network Redux staff how to deploy VRRP, OSPF, and other services, and the staff has managed the switches on its own since then.

The systems have been highly reliable since they were deployed in March, 2009. The high-density switches feature 48 GigE ports and four 10-Gigabit Ethernet ports, giving Network Redux more than enough capacity to handle growth in customer needs. For example, one customer went from spending \$10 per month on a shared server to spending \$10,000 per month on a server cluster within a year, and the Force10 switches scaled up seamlessly, allowing Network Redux to migrate the customer to dedicated servers without ever bringing down the application.

Network Redux uses the S50’s built-in SNMP v3 support for general management, along with ACLs for administrative access and AAA authentication for granular control of specific devices among engineers. In addition, the technical staff uses LACP to build links larger than Gigabit Ethernet to handle massive volumes of Layer 2 traffic between storage servers and database servers.



The S50’s software features make work easier for the Network Redux team in many ways. For example, the team connected its Ubersmith CRM system to the S50 switches, and Ubersmith can now automatically monitor traffic on a port-by-port basis to ensure that clients don’t exceed data thresholds or are charged appropriately when they do.

A Partner for the Future

Using the S50 switches, Network Redux has been able to scale within the ten cabinets it planned to build. “We didn’t expect them to be able to handle the traffic they do,” says Brenneke. “Now, we’re adding an iSCSI storage network from Dell to our current fabric, and we’re adding eight more Force10 S50s on each side in a fully redundant configuration. We’ll be able to use twice as many switches with twice as many ports based on the S50’s ability to handle anything we’ve been throwing at it.”

While the reliability and control offered by the S50 switches have been keys to Network Redux’s success in scaling out its network, Brenneke is most impressed with Force10’s support.

“Of everything, I’d say it’s the Force10 TAC (Technical Assistance Center) that really stands out,” he says. “I was working on Saturday night on one of the S50 stacks, and I ran into an unusual OSPF problem that had the potential to impact our network. It was 8 at night on a Saturday, and I got a return phone call within 5 minutes. The

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support engineer did a WebEx session with me, watched what I was doing, and showed me how to correct it. It blew me away. You just don't get that level of service from other vendors.”

Thanks to support from Force10's TAC, the Network Redux team has learned a lot about advanced switching and routing capabilities. For example, questions about how to use VRRP with LACP are quickly answered when TAC sends the proper configuration commands to accomplish the task.

Traffic volume has grown tenfold since the S50 switches were first deployed, and the network just keeps on humming. “Reliability has been rock solid,” says Brenneke.

“We know we're not Force10's largest customer by any means, but the level of service and support is outstanding,” Brenneke adds. “Force10 treats its customers the way we treat our customers, which is why the relationship is perfect for us. We wish all our vendor relationships were this good.”



Force10 Networks S50 Switch

In the future, Network Redux plans to acquire Force10 C- and E-series chassis-based switches as it continues to expand its network. “We're so comfortable with Force10 as a vendor that we're going to use it for all of our networking needs, from the edge to the access layer,” says Brenneke. “Our business depends on our network, and we are very confident in having our network depend on Force10 switches.”

For more information on Network Redux visit them online: www.networkredux.com



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