Increased Network Visibility Drives Data Accuracy

Major Gaming Company The Stars Group Chooses Network Critical to Increase Monitoring Accuracy and Tighten Security Against Network Intrusion

Summary

Online gaming is a global multi-billion dollar industry. With about 2.3 billion people playing online games, this industry continues to grow revenue in the double digit range and mobile gaming is one of the fastest growing markets within the industry. Adding mobile access to a mix of globally networked consoles adds even more complexity to a difficult security landscape. While security and trust in the system is the foundation of the online gaming industry, the high transaction volume and open networking makes gaming a prime target for cyber crime.

The Challenge

The Stars Group had been using both monitoring and security tools. However, they were not happy with the results coming from their tools. Under the old access platform, SPAN ports were used to provide traffic information to the tools. While most of the traffic was delivered to the tools most of the time, the company needed more accurate data. With SPAN ports, the company experienced dropped and corrupt packets being delivered to monitoring tools which in turn corrupted reporting output. As the company grows and expands, accurate data collection is foundational to competitive success.

Growth in microtransactions throughout the industry has changed the landscape from 'pay to play' to an integration of financial transactions throughout the gaming process. This further complicates network security requirements and increases the need for consumer trust in the site. Multiple network tools are needed to provide both monitoring

> **"Latency is our enemy. Network Critical tools let us protect our network and plan for future growth by giving us accurate data without adding delay into our network."**
>
> Director, Global Network Engineering

and protection from unwarranted intrusion. These tools must be connected to links safely and in a way that does not add delay or negatively impact network performance.

Each data center has a requirement to connect four single mode optical fiber links to two Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS) that have multi-mode optical fiber connections. This presents two challenges. One is physical media conversion, the other is aggregating traffic from four links into two IDS systems. Also, in addition to the security tool connections, monitoring tools must also be connected to the links for traffic visibility.

Network Critical

The Window to your Network™

> **"We were struggling with bad data sent to our tools disrupting our planning models and causing concerns with our security tools. The Network Critical solution solved both our monitoring and protection concerns without impacting production traffic."**
>
> Sr. Manager, Network Planning

Network Critical Solution

The Network Critical solution provides safe connection of monitoring and security tools with media conversion where necessary, aggregation of traffic and 100% accuracy of data. Passive 10Gbps optical TAPs provide fail safe visibility to link traffic. These TAPs require no power and operate by splitting the light budget on the link. Live network traffic continues through the TAP into the network while a mirror copy is sent to a SmartNA-XL hybrid Packet Broker. Within the SmartNA-XL, traffic from four tapped links is aggregated and delivered to two Intrusion Detection System (IDS) tools. These tools analyze incoming traffic and scan for anomalies consistent with potential malware or otherwise hostile traffic.

It is important to note that Network Critical passive TAPs and Hybrid Packet Brokers do not add delay into the network. For The Stars Group, network latency can potentially alter their customers' competitive outcomes. It is therefore, critical, that monitoring and security tools receive complete traffic visibility but add nothing to the actual data in the network. High network reliability and availability are also maintained by the Network Critical solution. Passive optical TAPs use no power allowing uninterrupted network traffic to flow regardless of potential power disruptions in the data center.

Using a modular architecture, the SmartNA-XL provides ports to aggregate network traffic to IDS tools but also integrates additional modules with ports to connect monitoring tools. The monitoring tools analyze traffic flows helping manage network planning, response times and future capacity requirements. All this functionality is available in a compact 1RU package with a simple, intuitive Graphical User Interface.

Solution Benefits

Billions of players spend billions of dollars around the clock playing games. The network is the business. The network must be reliable, available, secure and accurately synchronized. The only way to maintain the integrity of the network and the trust of the gaming community is to continuously monitor network traffic and erect strong barriers against malicious intrusion.

The Network Critical gaming solution allows this online gaming provider to check all the boxes. The TAPs allow the company to receive 100% accurate data providing confidence in the results of their analysis. Their planning data is now more accurate allowing their network to grow in concert with demand. The connected IDS tools provide confidence that network user information and financial transactions will remain protected and secure.

About Network Critical

Network Critical is an industry leader in network access technology. Our quality 1/10/25/40/100G modular TAP and Packet Broker solutions ensure that our customers have continuous network visibility. Network Critical products eliminate any concerns of downtime and our unique scale-out capabilities enable simple, cost effective expansion, as network and port density requirements grow.

The health of your network is always secure with Network Critical products. Our fully flexible range of TAPs and Packet Brokers are used with IDS, IPS, network traffic monitoring tools, sniffers and many other mission critical appliances, to provide 100% network visibility with zero packet loss.

With over 20 years experience, a number of industry "firsts" and a reputation for excellent customer service, Network Critical's solutions are widely used in global networks across a wide range of sectors including Finance, Telco, Government, Energy and Healthcare.

For more information, visit www.networkcritical.com

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