Coop Deploys Flowmon to Observe and Report Data Traffic of its 1300 Subsidiaries

CASE STUDY

INDUSTRY
Retail & Wholesale

PRODUCT
Progress Flowmon

SUMMARY
As one of the largest retail and wholesale companies in Switzerland, the Coop Group required a solution capable of monitoring 40,000 data flow points per second across approximately 1,300 stores. After developing a proof of concept, Coop deployed Progress Flowmon to consolidate data flow and implement a web portal for monitoring all traffic in a single view.

Challenge

Named from the concept of a “cooperative society,” the Coop Group is one of the largest retail and wholesale companies in all of Switzerland with 2,498 locations, of which 1,300 subsidiaries were part of this case. With its wide reach across the country, Coop’s data centers require extensive, up-to-date network bandwidth monitoring software to keep its branches running smoothly throughout the day. The infrastructure team, situated in Coop’s main headquarters, is responsible for monitoring the entire network and tracking any potential trespassers.

As the needs of the business and its customers grew over time, so did the network’s data monitoring software requirements. With its existing data solutions, the Coop team was challenged daily to properly oversee the growing complexity of the network. This included the numerous locations and data sources coming in and out of servers, close to 40,000 data flows per second could come in across Coop’s locations, and branch-focused issues, such as field agents in the stores struggling to diagnose in-store technology problems without a proper tool.

This situation kickstarted Roberto Abeledo Alonso, Network Administrator at Coop, to start thinking of a solution.

“Our field agents at branches need to be able to quickly and easily identify the source of a network performance issue,” said Roberto. “We also needed a solution that could scale to our requirements while staying within budget.”

Solution

Roberto created a proof of concept (POC) to mitigate these difficulties and drew upon Progress® Flowmon® as its backbone. Over six months, Roberto and the team deployed Flowmon into Coop’s network infrastructure. In his POC, Roberto had designed a unique system that amalgamated data traffic from multiple, distinct servers into one flow collector. From there, Coop’s network infrastructure team could view all data traffic from a single pane. Flowmon enhanced this design by adding the ability to see potential data fractures and notify Coop’s security team if necessary.

“I spend maybe 30 minutes a week with Flowmon, because I have 20 other tools to manage and maintain, like troubleshooting projects, network architecture and network design,” said Roberto. “I know how to use Flowmon and my six colleagues know to use it well.”

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Network Administrator at Coop
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As one of the largest retail and wholesale companies in Switzerland, the Coop Group required a solution capable of monitoring 40,000 data flow points per second across approximately 1,300 stores. After developing the POC, Coop leveraged Kemp Flowmon to consolidate a singular data flow and implement a web portal monitoring all traffic in a single view. This solution meant that the team could more swiftly troubleshoot and fix technical problems within stores.

Within that same deployment period, developers created a portal to be implemented within Flowmon. Previously, running complex analysis reports to figure out where flows are coming from. Instead, at one centralized point, anyone could log on and see where data traffic is coming from, along with viewing Coop store information.

An additional benefit they rolled out was patch management, where the team released program changes to Coop’s subsidiaries without trouble. For example, their point-of-sale systems needed an update to their software, but it could only be downloaded through the company’s network. Instead of taking time out of their already-busy schedules and spending hours updating it, Flowmon enabled Coop’s IT department to do it much faster.

Results

After it deployed Flowmon, Coop gained high-fidelity visibility into their traffic flows, thanks in part to the new system enabling the traffic to go into a singular location. Now, along with better insight into where the data is coming from, Roberto and his colleagues can log onto their Flowmon-based solution and effectively help all field agents working at store-level.

Locating and troubleshooting branch-level problems no longer takes hours to figure out and fix. Within minutes, the team’s Flowmon-based solution can detect and notify branches whenever a system is down.

Probably the most important aspect of Flowmon for Coop comes from how it has alleviated other tasks from the IT team. As a member of the network team, Roberto manages several tools that are exclusive to network infrastructure, and he now has the time to concentrate more on those tools. He takes comfort in knowing his entire team can utilize Flowmon and can assist when issues occur in one of the hundreds of store locations.

About Coop

The Coop Group operates in the retail as well as wholesale and production sectors. In the retail sector, Coop operates supermarkets and various specialist formats in Switzerland. In wholesale, the Coop Group operates through Transgourmet. The Coop Group has a history that goes back over 150 years and it has always been structured along cooperative lines. For the Coop Group, the focus is on the customers as well as their over 2.5 million cooperative members. With more than 95,000 employees, the Coop Group generates net sales of approximately CHF 31.9 billion.

www.coop.ch