



SaaS to Prompt Acceleration Services, Provider Says

Akamai and a customer say acceleration service reduces storage spending

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By [Mary Jander](#), February 1, 2008, 3:30 PM

The emergence of software-as-a-service (SaaS) offerings may stimulate growth of another kind of service -- WAN acceleration.

Akamai, whose Web Application Accelerator Service is among a handful of such offerings worldwide, says SaaS customers can reduce the cost impact of the servers, storage, and IT personnel required to deliver their services by offloading Web-based applications to the Akamai network.

One Akamai customer, [Remedy Interactive](#), backs this claim. "Using Akamai's service has allowed us to go leaner on equipment required for peering relationships. We're leveraging Akamai's caching, so that means we need a less robust infrastructure for managing data on our end," says Ben Archibald, EVP of technology for Remedy Interactive.

Remedy Interactive's need for SAN or NAS storage continue, but the improvements introduced by the use of Akamai mean that a new data center -- and attendant storage -- won't have to be added in order to improve application performance. What's more, Remedy Interactive can stop worrying about partnering with ISPs (and adding expensive equipment at those providers' peering points) in order to deliver Web-based services worldwide.

Archibald says his company, whose Web-based applications are aimed at reducing workers' compensation claims through education, risk assessment, and other kinds of online information, has been able to cut its server-based traffic by 30 percent to 40 percent since adopting the Akamai service. Response time for applications accessed by customers worldwide went up 62 percent and end users spent an average of eight minutes less on Remedy Interactive's applications.

Akamai says its network now consists of over 28,000 servers in 1,000 networks at 3,000 locations around the world, to which 2,600 customers have linked for various kinds of acceleration services, including ones aimed at [data center users](#). To use the services, an IT department has to set up Linux-based access of servers to an Akamai address.

In Remedy Interactive's case, most application requests can be served directly from Akamai's network. If there is a specific data request that requires more detailed information, that request is routed back to the originating host on Remedy Interactive's network.

Archibald says the biggest relief is that he can focus on applications and not on trying to get better connectivity over the Web for customers like Chevron, Hewlett-Packard, Northrop Grumman, and Visa. "I don't need to develop deep knowledge of peering relationships around the world," he says.

Akamai says other SaaS customers are queuing up to offload their ISP headaches, too. "We think of this as a service for a service," says Neil Cohen, senior manager of Akamai's Application Acceleration service.

Neither Akamai nor Remedy Interactive would disclose the amount paid for the setup. But in earlier interviews, Akamai's Cohen indicated that service provider customers can pay in the neighborhood of \$15,000 monthly for the vendor's IP Acceleration service, a separate but related offering.

Akamai's competitors include LimeLight Networks and Level3 Communications, but to date, those vendors have focused their efforts on interactive media companies that operate in gaming, social media, publishing, and Internet broadcasting.

The link between SaaS and WAN acceleration services will likely increase, however, since companies like Remedy Interactive can't benefit directly from the use of appliances like those from Cisco, Riverbed, or Packeteer. "We operate over the Web, so we can't put in an appliance where we don't control the infrastructure, Archibald says.

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