

Leading Law Firm Future Proofs Network Architecture and Increases Network Performance by 10 Folds

Rodyk & Davidson deploys Cisco Catalyst Switches to enhance security, increase availability and ensure scalability.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
<p>RODYK & DAVIDSON LLP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industry: Legal
<p>BUSINESS CHALLENGES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setup a reliable and scalable network architecture to enable future network services, such as voice and video conferencing Improve network performance by increasing access speeds from 100Mbit/s to 1Gbit/s Enhance security by enabling network segregation via virtual local area network (VLAN) and identity-based authentication
<p>NETWORK SOLUTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cisco Catalyst 3750 Series Switches Cisco Catalyst 4500 Series Switches
<p>BUSINESS VALUE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved overall network performance 10 fold Increased security with segregation of users using VLAN and identity based authentication Optimized existing IT investments Established a future-proof network architecture Greater peace of mind with enhanced reliability Lower total cost of ownership Ease network manageability

COMPANY DESCRIPTION

As one of Singapore’s largest full service law practices, Rodyk & Davidson LLP (Rodyk) is also its oldest law practice with almost 150years of service. Its team of more than 130 lawyers provides legal advice in Corporate, Finance, Intellectual Property & Technology, Litigation & Arbitration, and Real Estate. Headquartered in Singapore with a Shanghai regional office, Rodyk represents clients across myriad industries with its China, India and Indonesia Practices.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Priding itself as a leader in technology adoption, Rodyk wants to leverage Information Technology to deliver first-class legal solutions and services. Mr Gilbert Leong, Partner, Rodyk & Davidson LLP said, “While the caliber of our lawyers are our key advantage, we know that even the most brilliant lawyers need to be empowered by technology. That is why we want to establish a first-class infrastructure that is reliable, robust and scalable.”

A Cisco customer since its core switch purchase in 2000, Rodyk was impressed with the reliability of the Cisco switch, which served as its network backbone for more than seven years. During its merger with.

HelenYeo & Partners in 2002, the switch was reliable and easily upgradeable. By 2008, Rodyk’s growing requirements, the need for faster network speed and plans to adopt new technologies, prompted a review of its infrastructure.

”During the merger, we inherited a hodgepodge of vendor solutions and legacy equipment. As we did not have the luxury of a new network infrastructure then, this is the ideal opportunity to review our entire infrastructure from ground up. After considering business imperatives and future technology direction, we saw that the network architecture was the core. Regardless of the technology we want to adopt, the backbone must be able to support it,” explained Leong.

Besides supporting as many technologies as possible, including Voice over IP (VoIP) and video conferencing, Rodyk wanted a solution that delivered industry-leading robustness and reliability. “Due to the nature of our business, we simply cannot afford any downtime. We should be able to install the necessary pieces of the network solution, and trust it to run like clockwork,” said Leong.

Like all law firms, Rodyk handles vast amounts of paperwork ranging from client records, legal briefs, client billing, status reports and more. The accessibility and confidentiality of these documents across a high-speed network is another key requirement. With clients and other law firms frequently visiting its office for meetings, the network must enable segregation of guest users via Virtual Local Area Network (VLAN) and identity-based authentication for its internal users.

To achieve these objectives, Rodyk only wanted to partner a leading networking vendor which can design a future-proof architecture and be trusted to deliver first-class after-sales service and support.



NETWORK SOLUTION

After a thorough evaluation, Rodyk turned to Cisco, "Cisco has demonstrated its commitment to us and we know we will get the high level of service and support we expect. As a leading player in the networking space, we are assured of Cisco's viability and capabilities to deliver a solution that will meet our expectations," said Alvin Aw, IT Manager, Rodyk & Davidson LLP.

Rodyk decided to anchor its network architecture with Cisco® Catalyst® 3750 and 4500 Series Switches at its core, while deploying the Cisco® Secure Access Control Server 5.0 for advanced identity-based access control. The firm runs Windows Servers on its IBM blade servers. The new architecture went live in October 2008, after a two-month implementation.

The introduction of Power-over-Ethernet (PoE) in the Cisco Catalyst 3750-E Series Switches was a key attraction for Rodyk. Enabling PoE configurations with up to 15.4W of PoE on all 48 ports, the Cisco Catalyst 3750-E lowers total cost of ownership by eliminating the need for additional cabling to each PoE-enabled device.

Deploying the Catalyst 3750-E with Stackwise Plus technology in the wiring closet also eases network management, as up to nine switches can be managed via one IP address.

Designed for unified messaging, the Catalyst 3750-E empowers Rodyk's network to support data, voice and video in the future. Future migration to 10Gbps to support these high-bandwidth traffic will be a breeze with the Catalyst 3750-E. "Migrating from 1Gbps to 10Gbps will be accomplished in seconds by removing the TwinGig modules and replacing them with 10-Gig modules. The ease with which Cisco has enabled this clearly demonstrates its commitment to investment protection," said Aw.

The Catalyst 4500 Series Switches also delivers the redundancy protection Rodyk is looking for, with its hot-swappable supervisor, line cards, power supplies and fan tray.

To enable user authentication controls, Rodyk deployed the Cisco Secure Access Control Server 5.0, an authentication, authorization and accounting (AAA) access control server that supports a maximum of 50 AAA clients and 350 unique user logons in a 24-hour period.

BUSINESS VALUE

According to Leong, “Two key benefits of our new Cisco network architecture are improved network performance and increased network security.”

“With the new architecture, Rodyk enjoys an overnight increase in network speed by ten folds from 100Mbit/s to 1Gbit/s. As all of our PCs were already one gigabit-enabled, the bottleneck was the access speed between the server and the PCs. With the Cisco Catalyst Series Switches, we can now optimize our existing investments and enable our users to enjoy the true performance of their PCs. This is a definite boost to productivity,” said Aw.



“With the integrated reliability and redundancy of the Cisco Catalyst switches, and the advantage of a standardized Cisco backbone, we now enjoy greater peace of mind, in addition to enhanced performance, security and scalability.”

*Gilbert Leong, Partner,
Rodyk & Davidson LLP*

Security has always been top-of-the-mind for Rodyk, as evidenced by its introduction of the Two Factor Authentication (2FA) since its 2002 merger. The Cisco Secure Access Control Server helps Rodyk protect its confidential business information by authenticating users and machines against its Active Directory database. “Besides protecting our network from external users, we also need to protect confidential client information based on a “need-to-know” basis. The authentication of user access and segregation of VLANs by departments are critical in giving our clients a greater sense of security,” said Leong.

Granting guest access to the Cisco wireless network is now a few clicks away, thanks to easy remote configuration. Previously, dedicated leased lines were set aside for guest usage, resulting in increased maintenance costs and under-utilization of network resources. “Besides fully optimizing our LAN capacity, we now enjoy enhanced security with identity-based authentication and greater network protection from unauthorized access via the segregation of VLANs,” explained Leong.

He added, “The ease in managing the new Cisco switches means that these enhancements, though significant, are transparent to our users. We are pleased to provide greater convenience for guests visiting our office, without compromising network security and performance.”

With a wireless network with features secured network access and identity-based authentication, Rodyk’s lawyers can now securely access critical business information required to serve their clients well even when they are away from their desk and on another floor within the office.

Total costs of ownership are also lowered with Cisco’s PoE-enabled switches. “Instead of laying two cables in each lawyer’s office, we only need one now. New users can be added easily without installing additional power injectors and cabling in the walls and ceilings. Being wireless

and PoE-enabled, we now have the confidence to implement future initiatives whenever we are ready without incurring hefty infrastructural setup costs,” said Leong.

Perhaps the biggest benefit is greater peace of mind. “Even though there was no network failure previously, we faced intermittent issues and some anxiety with managing a mixed-environment,” shared Aw. Leong agreed, “With the integrated reliability and redundancy of the Cisco Catalyst switches, and the advantage of a standardized Cisco backbone, we now enjoy greater peace of mind, in addition to enhanced performance, security and scalability.”

NEXT STEPS

Looking ahead, Rodyk is considering the deployment of IP phones and video conferencing with Cisco Unified Communications. “We see Cisco as a strategic technology partner that will take us into uncharted waters as we explore new technologies in our roadmap. We are confident that Cisco will rise to the challenge, simply because they are one of the leading players in the networking space,” said Leong.