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WAN acceleration helps mortgage lender

LSI Mortgage sees WAN speeds improving with Expand and 3Com gear

By Matt Hamblen

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September 8, 2008 (Computerworld) Despite the gnashing of teeth over home mortgages and failures by some lenders, LSI Mortgage Plus is pushing ahead with plans to beef up WAN performance between its offices in St. Louis, Atlanta and San Diego.

Since March, Brian Beaman, director of IT at the Duluth, Ga.-based lender, has been rolling out WAN acceleration technology that is yielding a 30% to 40% reduction in the time it takes to send data between Atlanta and St. Louis. In tests, Beaman has also seen a 400% improvement over throughput by turning off [Microsoft](#) Terminal Services optimization tools and using the new acceleration technology.

Beaman, who expects to work on the effort through the end of the year, has deployed WAN acceleration modules from Expand Networks Inc. in Roseland, N.J., along with [3Com Corp.](#) Multi-Services Routers. The cost of optimizing links between St. Louis and Atlanta is \$20,000 so far, with San Diego still to be added.

3Com has a partnership with Expand to sell its products; Beaman said he has benefited from that partnership.

"It didn't bother me that 3Com was selling Expand products, and they were really open about it and let me speak to Expand about the technology and allowed me to feel comfortable about it," he said.

As for 3Com, which has weathered a number of financial and management challenges in recent years, Beaman takes the long view. "The way I look at it is that 3Com helped bring Ethernet to the forefront, and I look at a 20-year history and not a two-year history," he said. "If I thought 3Com would go away, I couldn't have picked them."

In tests, Beaman has seen an especially bloated loan origination system -- it's used to evaluate bigger mortgages -- load files in half the time once needed, thanks to the Expand and 3Com gear. "The loan origination system is server based and is so bloated and so big that even over a 4.5Mbit/sec. pipe, it took two minutes to load a file. It was miserable," he said. The time needed to load that file is now down to one minute or so.

Beaman said he learned about 3Com through a printer salesman, but evaluated its acceleration technology with Expand along with [Cisco Systems Inc.](#) and [Packeteer Inc.](#), among others. 3Com said Beaman's firm would save on the cost of buying more bandwidth by compressing data.

"They said you usually save money and have superior performance, but I didn't buy that at first until after looking at it for a time." His one-time license costs from 3Com for St. Louis and Atlanta have been \$20,000, a "huge" savings when compared to buying more bandwidth at up to \$3,600 a month.

Given the ability to save on bandwidth, LSI will likely expand its network to provide video training over the WAN. "With the market like it is, we're not hurting. ... But video is on the back burner now," he said.