If You Turn the Lights on in Your Network, Will You Like What You See?

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Whether or not you like everything you see, you will be astonished by what is actually going on in your network. From our experience helping companies around the world improve network visibility, security and control, these surprises provide you with the ability to fix issues you didn't even know you had, improve user experience, save unnecessary costs, exploit hidden business opportunities and—most important—make your network more valuable to your business.

Visibility's top benefit

The true business of your network is business processes. Bandwidth, throughput, latency and other common metrics are all aspects of evaluating how well your network supports your internal and external processes of conducting business.

Here's a case in point: When one of our customers turned on the lights in their network, they were most surprised to see a broken business process. The flow of applications constituting the process was found to be following unexpected paths that caused delays and malfunctions. With the lights on, it became clear where the network was helping business performance and where it was hindering it.

Such revelations are not uncommon. In our experience, there's often a misalignment between the way companies think their business processes are working and the way they're actually working. Processes generally underperform because of three things:

- The flow of applications that compose the process is broken
- The network is experiencing congestion and other traffic or equipment malfunctions
- Security-related anomalies are impairing or causing denial of service

Network visibility solutions should illuminate all three types of problems in real time. Your IT team should be able to identify specific protocols and applications, either encrypted or not, monitor and measure any static or dynamic policy element you define.

Increased visibility should also provide IT with insights into how to increase network performance. For instance, seeing which employees are using what applications and when, helps you prioritize access and define traffic management policies that meet your business goals and user expectations. You

Are your business processes working the way you think they are?

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can also make fully informed decisions about the size and timing of future network investments.
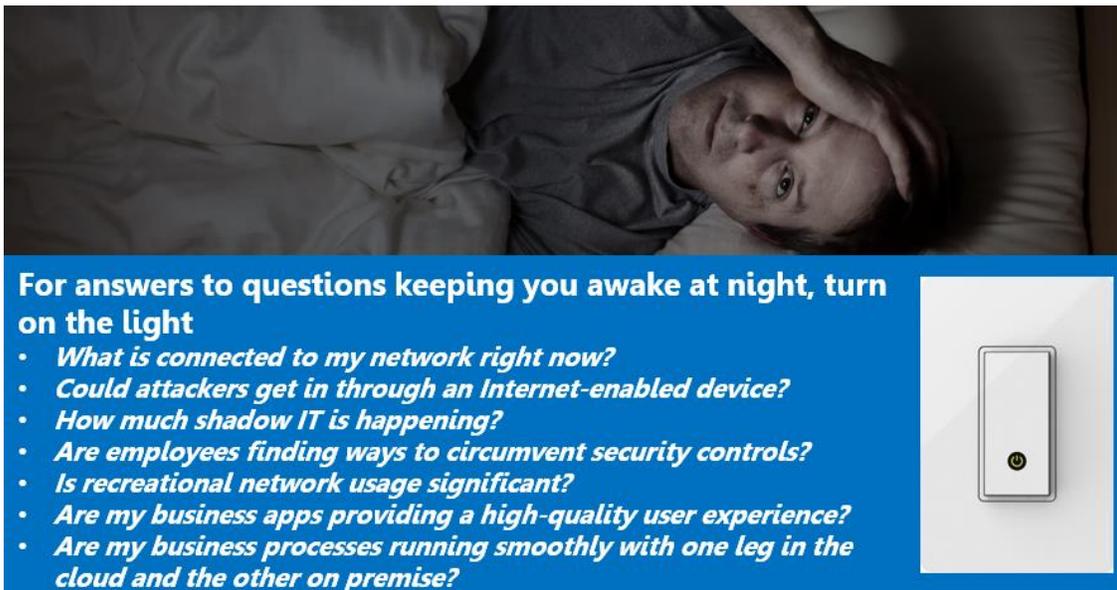
For answers to questions keeping you awake at night, turn on the light
- *What is connected to my network right now?*
- *Could attackers get in through an Internet-enabled device?*
- *How much shadow IT is happening?*
- *Are employees finding ways to circumvent security controls?*
- *Is recreational network usage significant?*
- *Are my business apps providing a high-quality user experience?*
- *Are my business processes running smoothly with one leg in the cloud and the other on premise?*

Once the lights come on, what can you see?

Increased visibility reveals a range of other surprises including:

- *Unsuspected root causes of current network problems.* You want to be able to remedy network issues for the long term, not simply solve problems when they arise. Understanding what is actually creating the service degradation issues or security vulnerabilities your Information Technology (IT) team is struggling with means you can direct resources efficiently to solutions.

- *Future problems in the making.* You might not like discovering that your network has more nascent issues than you suspected. But now you can be proactive in uncovering these issues before they turn into full-blown crises.

- *Opportunities to improve user experience.* The ability to see how business processes play out across the network is a big advantage. It reveals how well the network is supporting your priorities. It helps IT find ways to better support workflows and streamline interactions between applications and data.

- *Obstacles to application deployments.* No one likes seeing stumbling blocks in their path. Full visibility can uncover issues, for instance, migration complications to cloud and hybrid application architectures. Now you can clear them in advance.

Seeing more is always good—today, it's critical

As network connectivity and complexity soar—with the increasing presence of user-owned devices, anonymizers, shadow IT, data sharing via sanctioned and unsanctioned apps, and now IoT—C-level execs know their network teams are already in overdrive. Does it make sense to give them technology that exposes more issues and opportunities to deal with?

Certainly. In fact, it's the essence of wisdom. Because whether you look at today's challenges from a technology or business competition point of view, there's no margin for continuing to expend resources reacting to problems that could have been avoided. Success increasingly requires spotting and dispatching problems as they develop and proactively aligning network capabilities with business initiatives.

Moreover, visibility is a prerequisite for better security and control. You can't improve what you can't see. Best results come from a single solution that tightly joins all three.

It gets even better—the side benefits of seeing clearly

You might be amazed to find out that most of the time, turning on the lights on your network has unexpected side-benefits. We consistently find that companies implementing network intelligence/visibility solutions for a specific purpose gain value far beyond their original objective. For example, you'll be able to:

- *Avoid SaaS oversubscription.* Limit the number of seats and prioritize based on user roles and actual usage. Kill idle sessions to release seats.

- *Control and negotiate contractor costs.* Audit network activity by user. Measure recreational traffic.

- *Create an effective acceptable use policy.* Limit shadow IT applications, block risky applications and prevent employees or customers from accessing illegal or inappropriate web content.

- *Understand the hidden costs of security threats.* Find out if security vulnerabilities and the measures you're taking to combat them are having an impact on network user productivity and business performance.

Granular visibility: Essential for better control and security

Increased visibility is the first step toward and critical for exercising more security and control across enterprise networks. It provides real-time views on attackers and their targets while activating dynamic capabilities for surgically filtering out or containing threats. And with more granular visibility, you have more options for applying controls at multiple levels to optimize network performance.

Business opportunities from network visibility

A quick glance at some creative ways Allot Communications customers are taking advantage of increased network visibility:

An international retailer. When customers use in-store web browsers to go to competitor sites to compare prices, the company inserts banners and promotions to encourage them to make a deal in the store.

An international hotelier. Having originally implemented the solution to create differentiated WiFi packages for customers, the company is now offering targeted promotions based on user browsing histories.

A European restaurant chain. Improved network visibility was first used to block access to porn sites inside the restaurants. Later it was used to measure activity-based ROI from a Pokemon Go campaign.

Working with a single solution that tightly joins visibility, security and control, you quickly move from seeing issues and opportunities to taking actions that improve your network's ability to fulfill its original purpose: supporting your business.

To learn how Allot Communications can help you turn on the lights in your network, contact us at sales@allot.com.