

Network and Mobility Solutions Advertorial

Header: Network Services Map Flat World

By Ralph Judge

Thomas Friedman says the world is flat. The respected author and journalist argues that the convergence of technologies and social practices is creating a global, competitive and level playing field on which all countries, communities, companies and individuals can participate and be empowered.

On this flattened planet, it "is now possible for more people than ever to collaborate and compete in real time with more other people on more different kinds of work from more different corners of the planet and on a more equal footing than at any previous time in the history of the world." ¹

Also, across this vast, flat land, CEOs and CIOs in every industry sector and in every marketplace are obsessed with the same objectives: increasing revenue, reducing costs, improving customer satisfaction and enhancing security.

To achieve these goals, senior executives must look at the landscape and plot a network-centric map that will guide and enable their organizations, customers, partners, employees and suppliers – their entire value chain – to access data, share knowledge, acquire resources, manage assets and communicate decisions.

The network and the technologies which are connected to it, derived from it and depend upon it are coming together to create a "platform where intellectual work, intellectual capital, could be delivered from anywhere. It could be disaggregated, delivered, distributed, produced, and put back together again – and this gave a whole new degree of freedom to the way we do work." ²

But the globalized supply chain, collaborative capabilities, unprecedented connectivity and the technologies – from PCs, email and databases to search engines, open source software and mobile devices --- also present significant challenges and concerns for network security and consolidation.

Organizations need innovative strategies and approaches to secure, manage and support their converged networks. Next-generation wireless and wired networks and the enterprise data centre must be immediately and cost-effectively able to support new business models and processes.

Transactional Web sites, supply chain management, B2B collaboration, customer relationship management, mergers and acquisitions, business and IT outsourcing,

¹ The World is Flat, Thomas L. Friedman, p.8

² Friedman, p.7

and an increasingly mobile workforce are just some of the priorities and necessities the network must address.

HP Network and Mobility Services can assist organizations to build and maintain next-generation communications infrastructures, and provide them with the business and operational agility to adapt and respond quickly to new opportunities and challenges, but without compromising the security of any element in the value chain.

Sub-head: Adaptive Security

According to industry research firm International Data Corp., the top technology priorities for CIOs in 2006 include: data security and integrity, mobile and wireless solutions, e-commerce, customer service, business intelligence and supply chain automation.

Organizations have demands for the latest technologies, such as IP telephony, wireless LANs, virtual private networking, intelligent buildings, integrated voice, data and video applications, and unified communications systems.

But security threats are increasing in volume and multiplying rapidly. They are becoming sophisticated and diverse. The massive growth in mobile users, external workers and partners demands a centralized approach to setting access policies. Public and home wireless LANs can result in greater vulnerability. Mergers, acquisitions and divestitures create new tests in areas such as identity management and access control.

A study released by NetworkWorld Canada and HP in March surveyed enterprise and SMB organizations on the network security technologies they have purchased. The study revealed that 95 per cent had anti-virus software and 93 per cent had firewall and VPN software. It also found that 58 per cent and 51 per cent had anti-spyware software and authorization and authentication tools, respectively.³

Further, in the next 12 months, organizations were planning to purchase a range of security technologies, including anti-virus at 28 per cent, intrusion prevention and firewall/VPN at 25 per cent, authorization/authentication at 23 per cent, and identity management at 21 per cent.⁴

Historically, IT departments have built networks to link internal resources that are protected from the outside world. So enterprise networks are typically designed based on an "inside/outside" model, with strict controls and policies on the perimeter but a totally open core.

³ NetworkWorld Canada and ProCurve Networking by HP: Survey, March 2006

⁴ NetworkWorld Canada and ProCurve Networking by HP: Survey, March 2006

However, many threats stem from inside the network, requiring a more pervasive security approach. The basic architecture of the network needs to be rethought to more effectively secure, simplify and integrate applications and services.

HP's Adaptive Network Architecture (ANA) addresses security requirements through combining HP's network architecture and design methodology with a set of proven tools, processes, services, expertise and best practices. With ANA, security is an integral element of network design, rather than being added on afterwards.

ANA offers an innovative way to build cost-saving, modular networks and to seamlessly integrate them with legacy infrastructures. It segments enterprise networks into logical, manageable and easily reconfigurable "compartments" based on business needs.

Each compartment contains a group of resources, such as users, applications and services, with the same security profile and connectivity requirements. Also, each has its own network perimeter and set of access control rules. ANA extends the compartments across the enterprise network, regardless of their physical location, and manages them using centralized policy tools.

An ANA-enabled environment can deliver numerous benefits, including increased network security and performance; improved network agility to respond to business and technology change; reduced cost of security policy management and controls; and accelerated implementation of new services.

Sub-head: Consolidated Networks

IT consolidation is a key strategy to cut network costs, increase agility and enable integration. The NetworkWorld Canada-HP survey found that 41 per cent listed integration with existing equipment as a barrier to making investments.

Many IT consolidation efforts focus exclusively on the information systems within the data centre, overlooking broader issues like connectivity into and out of the centre, as well as interconnectivity between centres.

HP recognizes that the network plays an important role in every phase of the consolidation journey. HP offers comprehensive lifecycle services to design, deploy, integrate, manage, and support end-to-end network consolidation that can increase the network's capabilities and adaptability, while reducing overall network-related costs.

HP solutions span LAN and WAN environments and are designed to optimize data centre, system and application performance, availability and connectivity. They establish and support a modular, scalable, simplified network infrastructure that supports a range of functions.

These can include voice-data-video convergence, online transactions, data replication, and storage synchronization, as well as essential network services, including Domain Name Services, network and systems management, and proxy, security and directory services.

The solutions can deliver tighter network security from the perimeter, through the data centre to key processes and applications, and greater network agility through compartmentalization, centralized security policy management and dynamic provisioning.

Savings can be realized through centralized monitoring and management of the network, as well as the consolidation of equipment and Service Level Agreements. Organizations also benefit from having a single point of contact for multi-vendor network environment service and support.

A flexible, responsive network is the foundation that enables organizations to keep pace with changing business and operational requirements. Networking and mobility services and solutions can simplify, secure and create a high-performance network -- efficiently and cost-effectively.

Such services and solutions are becoming evermore imperative, as Friedman notes that the "flattening of the world means...that we are now connecting all the knowledge centers on the planet together into a single global network, which...could usher in an amazing era of prosperity and innovation."⁵

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