

Absa Group, Ltd.: Boosting WAN Capacity to Support Decentralized Applications



Business Profile:

Absa Group is one of the largest financial services providers in South Africa, offering banking services through some 900 branch and ATM locations. In addition, Absa owns banks in Tanzania and Mozambique and processes payments via data centers in South Africa, London, Geneva, Hamburg, Singapore, and New York.

Industry:

Absa relies on WAN links among its banks, branches, and data centers to speed transfers of financial data, and the company was moving to a decentralized application strategy. However some of the WAN links are as small as 64Kbps, and the cost of upgrading these to support distributed applications was prohibitive.

Solution:

Absa deployed Juniper Networks WX™ 20 and WX 50 application acceleration platforms at 45 key locations to triple the available bandwidth on its existing WAN links and enable trouble-free rollouts of its new decentralized applications and e-banking services.

Benefits:

Juniper Networks' equipment tripled the effective throughput of Absa's WAN links, eliminating the need for a \$2 million increase in annual communications charges.

"We needed a way to anticipate and manage growth on our backbone network, and buying larger WAN links just wasn't the answer. Juniper Networks gave us the capacity we needed and the ability to monitor traffic, so we can see exactly what kind of throughput we're getting."

Neville Perry
Group Consultant
Network Architecture Group

Company:

Absa (Amalgamated Banks of South Africa) offers consumer, merchant, and commercial banking, finance, and insurance services in South Africa, Tanzania, and Mozambique. Formed in 1992 by the merger of Allied, United, Volkskas, Bankorp, TrustBank, and Absa Vehicle Finance, Absa Bank was officially launched in October 1998. After two years, it was ranked as the second most popular banking brand in South Africa.

Customer Challenges:

Absa wanted to move to decentralized corporate applications, but was hampered by constrained WAN links at many of these locations, some as small as 64Kbps. Telecommunications costs in Africa are very high — for example, \$1,700 per month for a 64Kbps satellite from Mozambique to South Africa. In many locations, faster WAN links were not available, and in others, the cost was prohibitive: the IT staff projected an additional \$2 million for yearly WAN costs to obtain the needed upgrades.

Juniper Networks Solution:

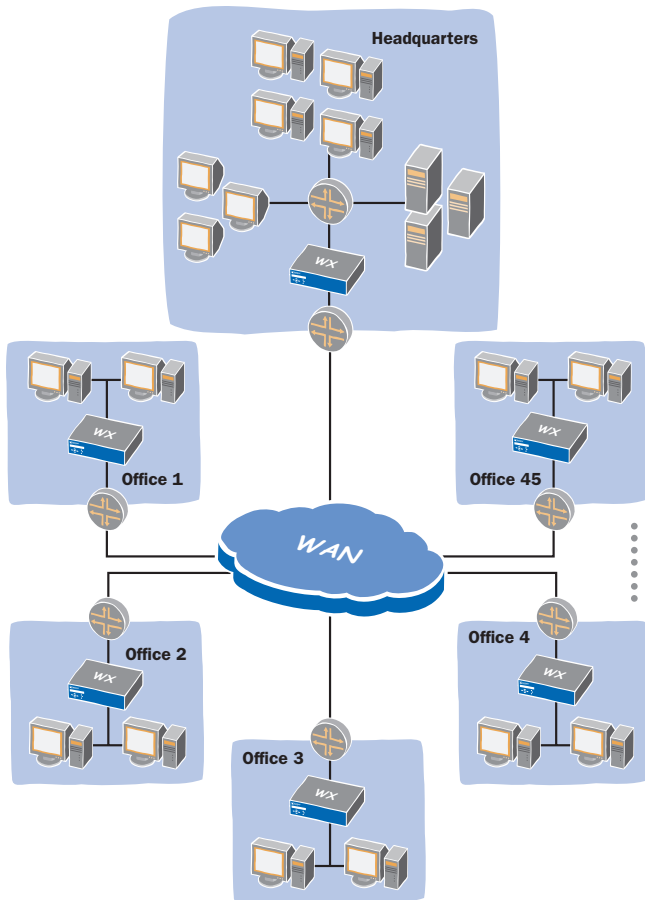
Absa deployed 45 Juniper Networks WX application acceleration platforms at key locations to support traffic growth on its WAN. The WX platforms have effectively tripled the capacity of Absa's existing WAN links without requiring higher monthly costs for faster connections.

Alternatives Considered:

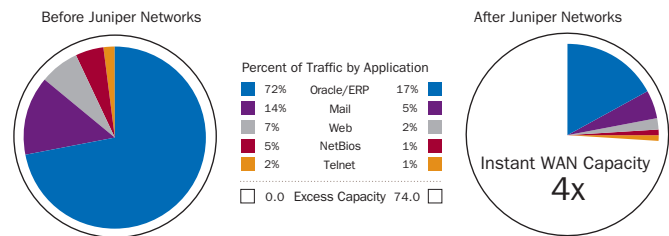
Absa's team investigated router compression solutions, but rejected them because they introduced additional latency and affected router throughput. The group also looked at other bandwidth optimization products, but found that they lacked Juniper Networks' QoS and centralized management and monitoring features.

Juniper Networks Benefits:

Juniper Networks' solutions tripled the available bandwidth on the links between Absa's key banking and data centers, and delivered the real-time network monitoring the company needed to determine how each of its applications affected traffic patterns. The WX application acceleration platforms reduced traffic on Absa's WAN links by up to 68 percent to enable effective rollouts of its decentralized application strategy on even the smallest links. Compared with the cost of upgrading its WAN links, the Juniper Networks solution paid for itself in less than 11 months.



Absa deployed WX 20 and WX 50 application acceleration platforms at key locations in South Africa, Tanzania, and Mozambique.



Absa reduced traffic levels on its WAN links by as much as 68 percent, and the Juniper Networks equipment returned its investment within a year.



CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS
AND SALES HEADQUARTERS
FOR NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA

Juniper Networks, Inc.
1194 North Mathilda Avenue
Sunnyvale, CA 94089 USA
Phone: 888-JUNIPER (888-586-4737)
or 408-745-2000
Fax: 408-745-2100

www.juniper.net

EAST COAST OFFICE

Juniper Networks, Inc.
10 Technology Park Drive
Westford, MA 01886-3146 USA
Phone: 978-589-5800
Fax: 978-589-0800

ASIA PACIFIC REGIONAL
SALES HEADQUARTERS

Juniper Networks (Hong Kong) Ltd.
Suite 2507-11, Asia Pacific Finance Tower
Citibank Plaza, 3 Garden Road
Central, Hong Kong
Phone: 852-2332-3636
Fax: 852-2574-7803

EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST, AFRICA
REGIONAL SALES HEADQUARTERS

Juniper Networks (UK) Limited
Juniper House
Guildford Road
Leatherhead
Surrey, KT22 9JH, U. K.
Phone: 44(0)-1372-385500
Fax: 44(0)-1372-385501

Copyright 2005, Juniper Networks, Inc. All rights reserved. Juniper Networks and the Juniper Networks logo are registered trademarks of Juniper Networks, Inc. in the United States and other countries. All other trademarks, service marks, registered trademarks, or registered service marks in this document are the property of Juniper Networks or their respective owners. All specifications are subject to change without notice. Juniper Networks assumes no responsibility for any inaccuracies in this document or for any obligation to update information in this document. Juniper Networks reserves the right to change, modify, transfer, or otherwise revise this publication without notice.