

CTO nightmare: aged infrastructure, poor network performance

Nile's holistic consumption model gives IT premium performance, keeps CFO happy

When Neil Clover came to SDI as its new CTO, he quickly realized he'd inherited a network that was long on problems and short on connectivity. While user frustration over unreliable wi-fi was the most obvious clue, Clover's extensive infrastructure background told him that the issues were bigger than an unreliable network. This was a network in need of an entire overhaul.

A network overhaul added to an already-growing priority list for Clover. He knew that he and his very lean IT team needed a new approach to deploying a network that wouldn't be all-consuming. Coming from the SDI supply-chain-as-a-service provider perspective, he was attracted to Nile's simpler, more secure network-as-a-service (NaaS).

"When the foundation wobbles, everything wobbles," says Clover. "Our network infrastructure was no longer a solid foundation, and the only way I was going to address that without letting other things slip through the cracks was by relying on Nile."

SDI



Industry
Supply Chain



Users
500



Region
Americas

The entire network, from planning, installation and operations thru maintenance was embraced by Nile. Offloading that from Clover and his IT team eliminated energy spent on tedious, time-consuming and complex tasks.

"With Nile, there is no lateral movement of malware, and the spreading nature of all users and devices is removed."

Neil Clover, CTO, SDI



Challenge



- Inherited aged network infrastructure
- Inconsistent connectivity hampered employee productivity
- Complex security policies resulted in pockets of vulnerability
- Unpredictable, costly and complex network refresh cycles

Outcome



- Secure, always-on SLA network
- Seamless and reliable network access and capacity for all users
- Fully enclosed zero trust campus network
- Holistic, pay-per-user subscription model for ultimate cost predictability

Focus on the business, not the network

Today, Nile provides always-on, secure connectivity and coverage for 200 SDI employees. The beauty of the Nile experience comes from eliminating the complex nature of planning, designing and monitoring a network. Nile-built sensors conduct 360° continuous monitoring, backed by AI-based softbots that continuously analyze and self-tune the network to guarantee performance.

“I never thought I would outsource my network, but that was before I started working with Nile,” Clover explains. “When I saw what Nile was doing, I was immediately very interested. The relentless simplicity of the Nile model just makes sense.”

Nile has freed up Clover and his IT team to focus their time on business-critical projects that help drive revenue, like product releases on its customer-facing software.

A mind-blowing shift in wireless experience

Connectivity on the SDI network was spotty at best - certain wireless access points were over-subscribed and others undersubscribed, leaving employees with an interrupted user experience. A congested network environment left the IT team to deal with network latencies and hair pinning.

That's all changed with Nile. The newly-deployed network delivers full-site coverage and high-performance capacity, enabling an uninterrupted user experience regardless of where employees are and what applications they're using.

“People always complain when the wi-fi is bad and never say anything when it improves,” says Clover. “But with the Nile service, we have users proactively commenting on the performance. It was a big jump and people noticed.”

In a major departure from his long-held belief that video conferencing must be hardwired for high-quality performance, Clover embraced what the Nile network guarantees. He left his hardwires behind and has never looked back. His high-definition video carts are now wirelessly connected and more reliable than ever.

“With Nile, we have a full HD video system running on the wi-fi. It's on wheels, ready to be used anywhere – that's how reliable the connectivity is now,” he says.

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Neil Clover, CTO

Gone rogue? Not on our watch.

With Nile's zero-trust model, Clover can overcome intimidating security challenges with confidence.

“Rogue devices are a reality, there's no getting around that, threats are ever present in today's world,” says Clover.

Nile's unique system of TPM-certificate authentication for each Nile element prevents unauthorized devices from gaining access to the network and its data. End-to-end MACSec encryption protects network data, abolishing snooping and sniffing. This zero trust network model eliminates man-in-the-middle and rogue device threats.

To further bolster security, IEEE 802.1x authentication across wired and wireless assures Clover and his IT team that threats like physical social engineering no longer can pose a threat to the SDI network. And zero trust isolation only allows for traffic to flow north and south, eliminating malware proliferation.

“With Nile, there is no lateral movement of malware, and the spreading nature of all users and devices is removed,” says Clover.



Added bonus: security reduces costs

In today's world of ever-increasing cyber threats, many companies, including SDI, are required to protect themselves and their data with security insurance. At its recent insurance policy review, SDI received a welcome surprise.

"As part of renewing our insurance, the carrier reviewed our network security," explains Clover. "They were so impressed with the quality of the Nile network, they actually lowered our premium."

CTO vs CFO no more

It can be a difficult balancing act between CFO and CTO when it comes to sourcing infrastructure equipment. There's a fine line between extending the life of networking equipment and risking network performance. Clover was looking to upgrade a switch that was severely impacting network performance, but the finance team showed that the equipment was passable by meeting the bare minimum.

Nile's pay-per-user model eases these tense conversations around budget priorities and network performance. This subscription encompasses the entire network, eliminating all capital expenditures and the unexpected costs and complexities that come with configurations, delivering a highly-predictable Opex model.

"Nile ensures that we never deal with the issue of aging equipment impacting network performance," says Clover.

Visibility that drives drastic simplicity

"The simplicity of network management with Nile has significantly changed where IT spends its time and effort," Clover says. "And Nile's elimination of configurations reduces real risk, it takes human error out of the equation."

The Nile Customer Portal delivers granular visibility into the performance of the network, applications and infrastructure. This level of insight helps the IT team troubleshoot issues outside of the network for faster resolution time.

"When you're having performance issues and you don't know why, it's frustrating and a huge time sink," says Clover. "But Nile takes the network out of the equation and the slotting of different views in the portal lets us troubleshoot outside the network."

Thanks to Nile, we don't have to worry about aging infrastructure impacting our network or procuring expensive gear. We only pay for what we use and need - not a dollar more. Conversations with my team have now shifted from hard, inflexible capex costs to predictable opex costs that we can rely on."



Chris Moore, CEO

Big or small, Nile has it covered

Clover believes Nile is a great fit for any company, regardless of size. Larger companies can benefit from the simplicity Nile brings to the equation. And for smaller companies, with lean IT teams, Nile eliminates time-consuming network maintenance, freeing up time to dig deeper into the network infrastructure. He's eager to expand Nile into SDI's smaller locations where the IT presence is limited.

"Network problems were always in the back of our minds, and that stress distracted us from diving deeper into other issues," says Clover. "Nile eliminated that worry, making us more effective as an IT team."



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