Global Credit Union

GLOBAL CREDIT UNION

Global Credit Union leverages Alluvio by Riverbed, gaining visibility and actionable insights to deliver high-quality employee and member experiences.

Global Credit Union (previously known as Alaska USA Federal Credit Union) had disparate monitoring tools, none of which could explain,in one single pane of glass, incidents across their complex infrastructure or why applications weren't performing to expected levels for end-users at its many locations. Because many of the tools were unique to each application, the credit union struggled to understand the impact of events across the environment.

With Riverbed, Global has gained visibility into its entire environment–becoming proactive rather than reactive. Global is using actionable insights from full-fidelity telemetry that spans the enterprise to improve user experience, ultimately providing its members with high-quality experiences.

"We can have proactive engagements, where we say, let's start repairs on Tuesday at midnight instead of during the day so we don't impact daily operations. The analysis of the data and being able to report on it is equally as important as the remediation itself, because we can fix it proactively."

Sol Posenjak,
Senior IM Operations Engineer, Global Credit Union

Global Credit Union is the 18th largest credit union in the United States. Headquartered in Alaska, where it was founded in 1948, this not-for-profit financial services cooperative is owned by over 700,000+ members throughout the world. It operates through a network of 72 locations with branches in Alaska, California, Washington, Arizona, and Idaho. Technology plays a significant role in providing a seamless member experience in the credit union's cloud strategy.

700,000+ members throughout the world

In Brief

Challenges

- Lacked end-to-end visibility into its environment

- Unable to produce metrics and data easily and accurately for performance baselines and improvement

- Had trouble isolating problems

- Less than optimal critical incident resolution and troubleshooting

Solution

Alluvio™ Unified Observability portfolio including:

- Alluvio™ Network Performance Management (NPM) including Alluvio™ AppResponse and Alluvio™ NetProfiler

- Alluvio™ NetIM IT for IT Infrastructure Monitoring (ITIM)

- Alluvio™ Aternity End-user for end-user experience monitoring (EUEM)

Benefits

- Extensive monitoring dashboards to oversee critical applications across its 72 locations

- Faster, more efficient problem diagnosis and issue resolution

- Increased security, stability, and performance for the best member experience

- Reduced incident counts by 150-200 per month with auto remediation

- A stable, high performing environment for users, which translates to high-quality member service

Proactive rather than reactive network, app, and end-user monitoring

"From a cultural perspective, we put an extremely high value on our members that focuses on providing exceptional service, value, and convenience," stated Douglas Horner, Senior Vice President, IM Operations at Global Credit Union. "We must ensure that our systems are always available and always performing at their highest levels."

"If we have an environmental event that impacts our approximately 2,200 users and 700,000+ members, we need to provide the rapid response times our users and members expect," explains Horner. Global wanted to be armed with information to see and remediate any issue before it occurs so members and staff are not impacted.

"We did not have complete end-to-end visibility into our environment," reveals Horner. "The moment we asked a question, staff would start working with various tools trying to piece together the answer. We had very highly skilled staff, working very hard to provide and analyze data, which should ideally be available with a click of a button. The data was also not as reliable since it was assessed and aggregated manually across applications unique to specific environments."

Global also wanted full and unified visibility over its environment so that it has access to application data flows, ultimately helping the credit union to monitor and improve applications performance. Global decided to bring in an end-to-end solution for visibility and unified observability. This initially included advanced network performance management (NPM) for network and application visibility, and soon after end-user experience monitoring (EUEM).

Portfolio that unifies data, insights, and actions

Global rolled out Alluvio by Riverbed solutions—an innovative Unified Observability portfolio that unifies data, insights, and actions across IT to deliver seamless digital experiences for users. They leveraged Alluvio's full-fidelity network, application and EUEM telemetry and reduced the high volume of alerts by correlating multiple high-fidelity trouble-indicators into a single high-confidence incident. The solution surfaces actionable insights so IT staff can quickly resolve any business-impacting issues and ensure high productivity and performance.

The power of insights

The Alluvio portfolio is helping Global eliminate data silos and improve decision-making, while also alerting IT of any issues anywhere across the digital ecosystem. With a simple user interface, the Credit Union can get an integrated view of its network, applications, and the user experience. "Previously, we had a lot of tools and external solutions, each monitoring an individual site," says Sol Posenjak, Senior IM Operations Engineer at Global Credit Union. "Every application we used had its own monitoring tool. So, it was all very application dependent."

"There are many tools out there that allow us to capture infrastructure data and network data, but there wasn't a single tool that we found previously that could aggregate all that data – from networks, apps to end users' devices – into a single pane of glass," says Horner. "However, Riverbed aggregates data across all these layers and allows all of our staff to troubleshoot critical events consistently and quickly. This ensures everybody's looking at the same data and in the same way. We've actually witnessed a significant improvement in the troubleshooting process during our rapid response engagements."

Today, Global can hold vendors accountable when they do not meet SLAs, thanks to Riverbed's SLA dashboards for critical applications, which sends alerts when there is an issue. "As a result of the robust monitoring capabilities we are now able to accurately measure vendor performance against SLAs," reveals Horner. "It has been a very positive experience for us. In one case, we used Alluvio AppResponse and Alluvio NetProfiler to identify where SLAs were not being met, and had accurate and timely data to share with the vendor resulting in a service credit. Our strategy is to integrate these monitoring solutions into our entire operational framework. In addition, we are on the verge of implementing synthetic testing into our CI/CD pipeline as part of the product deployment process. We are very excited to work with our product development teams to show the value monitoring and testing brings to the table in the areas of reliability, stability and performance for new development initiatives."

Faster troubleshooting and response times

The ability to troubleshoot network problems has improved for Global since implementing the Alluvio solutions from Riverbed. Proactive troubleshooting, thanks to intelligent alerts and dashboards, is helping the credit union solve issues before they become major problems. "Today we are in a very proactive position. We have visibility into what is happening on our endpoints. For instance, we can call a branch and discuss performance issues we are seeing and work proactively with the user to correct the problem," says Horner. "It really changes the tone of the conversation, because the end user feels someone already knows what's going on," adds Posenjak.

"We can even have proactive engagements, where we say, let's start repairs on Tuesday at midnight instead of during the day so we don't impact daily operations. The analysis of the data and being able to report on it is equally as important as the remediation itself, because we can fix it proactively," explains Posenjak.

"Without a doubt, the time our staff spend troubleshooting during a rapid response is much more efficient having all the data in a single pane of glass," said Horner. "Previously, when we had a group of very smart staff on a call, we couldn't really say whose data was more accurate. But today, when everyone's looking at the same report and data, it makes the process so much easier. Everyone is more agreeable, and it reduces the stress level."

Having full visibility around how the applications are performing empowers Global to get down to the facts, eliminating guesswork.

> ## "Without a doubt, the time our Analysts spend troubleshooting during a Rapid Response is much more efficient having all the data in a single pane of glass."

Doug Horner,
Senior Vice President & IM Operations, Global Credit Union

Global can also now measure its end-user device and application experience remotely, proactively, and non-invasively with Alluvio Aternity. Posenjak explains, "When end users started working from home during the pandemic, we were presented with a new level of challenges that manifested from a remote workforce. Simple things we used to take for granted, like patching and managing maintenance windows, became increasingly difficult as the number of devices in our environment scaled up."

Using Aternity the credit union was able to identify usage trends and non-compliant or unpatched devices. During this time, the Credit Union was also able to use Aternity to validate specific compliance settings, like disk encryption, and enforce their standards regardless of whether it was on or off network.

Leveraging Aternity, the credit union was able to also progress with manual and automatic remediation of issues that were frequently troublesome.

"We've used auto remediation to reduce our incident counts by 150 to 200 in a month in one particular case," says Horner. "We analyze the user's hard drive, and if the hard drive is about to fill up, we have a script that automates the clean-up of the drive.

Our goal has always been to create an environment that is as self-aware and self-healing as possible. We have also used auto remediation as a temporary work around for complex, hard to solve problems. In one case, auto remediation eliminated over 8,500 incidents in one month reducing significant burden on our service desk staff."

The credit union's IM team could also help other teams when they needed more visibility into their environment. When one of the teams encountered the Log4J issue—a vulnerability in Java logging utility that enables remote code execution and exploits a variety of commonly used software, they asked Global's IM Operations team for help. The team created AppResponse reports to perform packet-level analysis of any malicious code that could be embedded in the Java utility. "We didn't replace any of their tools, but just helped augment them and understand their environment by providing more visibility," says Horner.

"The Alluvio unified observability solution from Riverbed has given us the ability to provide a stable, high performing environment for our users, which translates to high quality experiences for hundreds of thousands of members," says Horner. "Additionally, as a Beta customer for the SaaS-delivered unified observability solution, Alluvio IQ, we've been impressed with the simplicity, analytics and auto-remediation being designed into the product. These capabilities will provide greater insight into the extensive data running across our company, helping to surface the most important issues for action and reducing alert fatigue. In the future, we're looking forward to adding more automation to remediate potential issues, which frees up IT time while ensuring we continue to deliver on user expectations."

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Riverbed — Empower the Experience

Riverbed is the only company with the collective richness of telemetry from network to app to end user that illuminates and then accelerates every interaction so that users get the flawless digital experience they expect across the entire digital ecosystem. Riverbed offers two industry-leading solution areas – Alluvio by Riverbed, an innovative and differentiated Unified Observability portfolio that unifies data, insights, and actions across IT, so customers can deliver seamless digital experiences; and Riverbed Acceleration, providing fast, agile, secure acceleration of any app over any network to users, whether mobile, remote, or on-prem. Together with our thousands of partners, and market-leading customers across the world, we empower every click, every digital experience. Learn more at riverbed.com/unified-observability.