



Monolith Allows Radiant to Deliver Seamless & Superior Service to its Customers



Customer: Radiant Communications
Headquarters: Vancouver, BC, Canada
Industry: Managed Services

Challenge:

Provide exceptional service to business clients

Solution:

Monolith Software for consolidated fault, performance and availability monitoring and real time dashboards

Results:

- Swift deployment and rapid ramp to productivity
- Limitless flexibility, openness and scalability 'future-proofing' Radiant's investment
- Low administration, implementation time, and short ramp to productivity for lowest TCO of any vendor
- True vendor partnership – willing to listen and work with customers to meet unique needs
- Open API provides easy and smooth integration with internally developed provisioning and trouble-ticketing systems
- Single platform approach simplifies administration, eliminates the need for integration across monitoring tools, and streamlines vendor management

About Radiant Communications

Headquartered in Vancouver, Canada, Radiant Communications (www.radiant.net) provides businesses with a comprehensive range of IP-based data communications services including the largest on-net DSL footprint across Canada and the US; T1 and E10/E100 fibre broadband, coupled with MPLS; IPSec, and SSL private networking. From its data centres in Toronto and Vancouver, Radiant also delivers cloud computing services connected directly into customers' private networks. The cloud computing services include hosting mission-critical applications, disaster recovery, and fully managed Microsoft Exchange. In operation since 1996, the company currently serves over 18,000 business locations in Canada and the United States from its offices in Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal, Calgary, and Edmonton.

Radiant is distinguished for its unrelenting focus on the data communications and IT needs of Canadian companies across a variety of industries such as retail, hospitality, financial services, logistics, and professional services. Radiant's customers range from single-site companies needing Internet connectivity and Exchange email, to continent-wide chains with thousands of stores needing highly customized private networks.

Competing against much larger players such as TELUS, Bell, and IBM, Radiant recognizes that flexibility and customer service are unique competitive differentiators. These qualities are embedded deeply within Radiant's culture. "We gain our edge in the market by meeting our customers' specific needs quickly and precisely, then delivering highly responsive service," says Adrian Byram, Radiant Communications' Executive Vice-President and CTO. Clearly, the focus on customer service works for Radiant – monthly customer satisfaction surveys consistently show that over 85 percent of its customers say they would recommend Radiant.

The Challenge

More and more small and medium-sized businesses today partner with managed service providers (MSPs) to assume management of critical IT and networking functions, such as the management of wide-area private networks, email, and critical data applications. The rise of virtualization for server partitioning has also enabled businesses to shift responsibility to the MSP for more and more computing functions, enabling smaller companies to gain 'big company' benefits from a centrally administered, secure



Byram, Executive Vice-President and CTO, Radiant Communications in the data center

“Monolith’s platform is very powerful, open and incredibly flexible. I have enough knowledge of the platform now to be assured that our sales team can come to me with a problem and I’ll know with confidence there is a way to solve it in Monolith.”

**- James Martin,
Director of Technology Strategy,
Radiant Communications**



data center with full redundancy of mission-critical servers and network facilities. Radiant’s business is built on precisely this model. “Our clients turn to us to deliver a seamless, always there service – whether it’s data communications, hosted Exchange, or cloud computing. We become a single throat to choke for all their needs,” says Byram.

But with this relationship comes tremendous responsibility for Radiant as an MSP. “All hell would break loose if our systems should ever fail,” admits James Martin, Radiant Communications’ Director of Technology Strategy. Radiant’s retail and business customers have become increasingly dependent on their broadband connection for business, and even more reliant on their IP connection to enable mission-critical point of sale (POS) transactions and other applications. “We need to provide highly reliable systems, 24X7 connectivity, and at a reasonable price. But the question becomes how to you manage to that? Customers have DSL, with a fail over to dial, cable or even wireless depending on the location. If there is a failure, the client may not even be aware of it. It’s up to us to be proactive in our management of these complex systems for our customers. We need to have an expansive and reliable monitoring platform that is actively monitoring the status of a client, and alerts us to points of failure immediately so we are able to proactively intervene and repair.”

To add a bit of extra pressure, Radiant, like all MSPs, has contractually enforced service level agreements (SLAs) with its key clients that carry stiff financial penalties for non-compliance, triggered within a matter of hours in some cases depending on the nature of the service. Reporting around these service level agreements is today a manual and labor intensive effort. Byram and Martin both recognize that Radiant could gain a clear competitive advantage by automating this SLA reporting process and providing clients with greater visibility into the performance of individual services and the overall network.

The Solution

Radiant has always used tools to monitor its network and services, and through 2007, relied on a popular open source solution called Nagios (technology evolved from the NetSaint network monitoring project) for auto discovery, scheduling, alerts and metrics collection supplemented by in-house development efforts. But as the business evolved and matured, it was time to ‘step up its game’ and invest in a Tier 1 commercial monitoring platform with more sophisticated capabilities – one that could offer Radiant and its customers improved scalability and reliability. James Martin and his team developed a list of requirements for a new solution that included advanced features for multi-tenancy, improved fail over capabilities, and enhanced correlation. The team also was seeking a cohesive monitoring platform versus a suite of integrated point tools – one without limits -- that could expand with the business and easily absorb new technologies and functionality over time without forcing the Radiant team to rewrite the application from scratch.

Like many buyers today, Radiant’s search for tools and vendors began with a Google search. The company looked at the classic Tier 1 brand names including IBM Tivoli, NetCool, and HP OpenView, but discarded them from the short list early in the process. These vendor technologies were quite rigid in their design, and total cost of ownership for the suites was very high. While licensing costs were part of the decision factor, the Radiant team also took into account downstream costs including implementation time, time to productivity, services requirements, and administration costs in their total cost analysis. Martin and his team narrowed down the short list of vendors to Monolith Software and NetQoS. James Martin then did a deeper dive on each candidate to thoroughly examine their respective capabilities and limitations.

Monolith rose to the top. The platform’s powerful multi-tenancy capabilities, the adaptability and flexibility of the framework, powerful reporting and dashboard features, and the willingness of the Monolith team to respond to Radiant’s needs and quickly incorporate new functionality into the core platform – Radiant didn’t want features necessary to its business to be treated as a separate, unsupported development branch -- sold the Radiant team on Monolith Software and its technology. By contrast, NetQoS, like the other larger player’s technologies, was found to be too rigid. Monolith’s platform offered an open API with broad access to system functionality, which, for the development-minded Radiant team came as a real bonus.

Due to the complexity of integrations into in-house systems for provisioning and trouble ticketing, Radiant elected to handle their own implementation, configuration and customization of the Monolith system over a six month period. Monolith travelled to Vancouver to train Radiant’s in-house developers, and within a few short days, there was sufficient knowledge transfer to allow Radiant to begin the implementation effort. The team found the platform very easy to work with, enhance and customize. It was also extremely easy to create and modify dashboards.

“We may never be fully done with Monolith. The system is powerful; so limitless in its flexibility; we could be expanding and adding capabilities for years”

**- James Martin,
Director of Technology Strategy,
Radiant Communications**



“We tied the Monolith system into our provisioning/ticketing system. Monolith now collects all events and automatically opens and closes trouble tickets for the individual services.

We get much richer data into the trouble tickets and our techs can now deal with problems more efficiently. It’s great.”

- James Martin,

*Director of Technology Strategy,
Radiant Communications*



The Benefits and Results

Phase one of the Monolith implementation is now in production with Radiant’s connectivity tech support teams. Of the 20 staff across the teams, about half are responsible for dealing with trouble tickets. They have direct access to Monolith, and Monolith is set up to automatically talk to the internally developed trouble ticket system to update and/or create tickets based on event information. Radiant is also using Monolith to monitor its own internal infrastructure, and the team is beginning to leverage the platform’s powerful dashboard capabilities for more comprehensive reporting, including trending and scalability analysis.

Phase two of the implementation will see Radiant move to fully embrace multi-tenancy, giving customers direct access in the platform and to simplified reports and dashboards through a customer portal. “They’ll be able to see for themselves what Monolith sees,” says James Martin. “We envision integrating Monolith into our ‘mother ship OSS’ this step could eliminate thousands of man-hours and dramatically reduce the delivery time of our customer portal by months if not years.”

Phase three will see the introduction of event correlation to facilitate detection and analysis of outages and enable chronic site and problem detection. This phase will likely also include a global linking of customers into the trouble ticketing process, and based on early feedback from customers, richer reports and dashboards. Eventually, Radiant can see Monolith completely replacing the company’s current internal monitoring systems which handle alerts within its network operations centre. “In truth, we may never be fully done with Monolith. The system is powerful, so limitless in its flexibility; we could be expanding and adding capabilities for years.”

About Monolith Software

Monolith Software is the leading provider of operationally focused technology management software for network operations centers (NOCs) delivering the only fully integrated platform for managing fault, availability and performance on the market today. Service providers and IT organizations seeking to increase operational efficiency and drive down costs while maintaining 99.999 percent uptime and availability turn to Monolith Software’s next generation management and monitoring solution for real time insight into the health, performance and availability of mission critical systems and applications.