Referentia Builds Managed Security and Network Services in the Amazon EC2 Cloud with AccelOps

Customer: Referentia

Industry: Managed Services/ Managed Security Services Provider

Products: AccelOps IT operations management for cloud and virtualized infrastructures

Platforms/Connectivity: Amazon Elastic Compute Cloud (EC2)

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Anthony Giandomenico
Director of Solutions, Referentia

Cyber security, regulatory compliance and the global nature of threat vectors have changed dramatically since Referentia Systems was founded in 1996. What has remained unchanged, however, is the company's dedication to helping protect clients from disruption to their critical infrastructure and applications. Headquartered in Honolulu, the company has approximately 100 employees and locations in San Diego, Calif., Albuquerque, N.M., and Sterling, Va.

Referentia is a leading provider of mission-assured cyber security technologies and data center solutions for the federal government, the Department of Defense and other critical infrastructures. Increasingly, the critical infrastructures of small and medium businesses, as well as those of state and local governments, are threatened as cyber attacks become more common and increasingly sophisticated. Business operations are increasingly dependent on high-performance network availability. These trends have led Referentia to provide cyber security and network performance management services for healthcare, energy, hospitality and transportation companies, as well as for federal and local government and educational institutions.

Only the largest companies and organizations can afford to maintain the staff and skill sets required to protect themselves. For most organizations, however, the cost and shortage of skilled security and IT professionals makes it impossible to manage critical infrastructure performance and security and comply with regulations such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS). Because Referentia already has a strong pool of security and IT talent, it makes sense for the company to expand its cyber security offerings by adding managed security and network services.

THE CHALLENGE: Expand business to provide managed security and network services. Build a scalable, yet flexible, solution while minimizing cost

Referentia saw an opportunity to help small and medium businesses and state and local government agencies secure critical infrastructures and improve overall IT efficiency through managed services. As a well-established and successful consulting and solution

End User Profile

Managed Security and Network Services in Action

Prince Resorts Hawaii offers some of the islands' top vacation experiences with warm island hospitality and luxurious resorts in beautiful oceanfront settings. Prince Resorts looks to Referentia to provide managed security and network monitoring services. The company is subject to PCI DSS regulations and depends on its critical infrastructure to keep its hospitality business running smoothly and efficiently. Prince Resorts has a limited number of dedicated IT staff and looked to Referentia to provide greater visibility and insight into its infrastructure operations so that problems can be detected and resolved before they impact the resorts' core business operations. Referentia uses AccelOps' integrated SIEM, performance and availability monitoring platform to continuously monitor and correlate events across the enterprise in real-time for Prince Resorts. Referentia analyzes, tunes and assists in responding to any threats detected as part of its managed security service. In addition, Referentia manages and monitors networking device logs, configuration changes, patches, upgrades and event response as part of its managed network services. Referentia also provides Prince Resorts with monthly reports that are compiled using AccelOps. Within hours of installation at Prince Resorts, AccelOps uncovered a number of previously unknown network issues that Referentia's experts were able to fix by reconfiguring some devices and re-segmenting the network.

> *"The impact using AccelOps software was immediate – better performance and more proactive security."*
>
> Ryan Doi, Director of Information Systems, Prince Resorts Hawaii

provider company, Referentia had the staff and expertise to install, configure and manage security and networking technology and operations. After all, the company has helped assess and protect some of the nation's most demanding IT environments for decades. However, the company did not itself own all the tools, network and systems required to offer managed services and was reluctant to invest in bricks and mortar and tie up working capital. Ideally, Referentia wanted to build its Managed Service Provider (MSP) business in the cloud.

The company needed a monitoring platform that would operate completely in the cloud and yet provide all of the functionality, flexibility and scalability required to support a growing multi-tenant MSP business that monitored all aspects of critical infrastructure.

"To be effective as an MSP, we needed a monitoring solution that gathers and correlates all the infrastructure security, performance and availability information in a single pane of glass and gives us a clear picture of the issues and bottlenecks," said Anthony Giandomenico, director of solutions at Referentia. "There are going to be issues on networks. What we need is a quick way to see what's happening regardless of where it comes from: the network, system, security, storage or application. AccelOps provides this. The faster we can pinpoint an issue, the faster we can resolve it."

The Referentia team knew it would be breaking new ground by implementing a solution completely in a public cloud and was prepared for some hiccups. The team took this into consideration when choosing a monitoring vendor, and included in its decision criteria a requirement that the vendor act as a partner who shared Referentia's passion for satisfying clients. They were looking for knowledge and responsiveness from the vendors under consideration throughout the assessment.

THE SOLUTION: AccelOps integrated SIEM, performance and availability monitoring software running in Amazon Elastic Compute Cloud (EC2)

Referentia assessed multiple Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) and network monitoring vendors in its search for a vendor partner that could provide a suitable platform on which it could build its MSP business. Although many of the vendors consid-
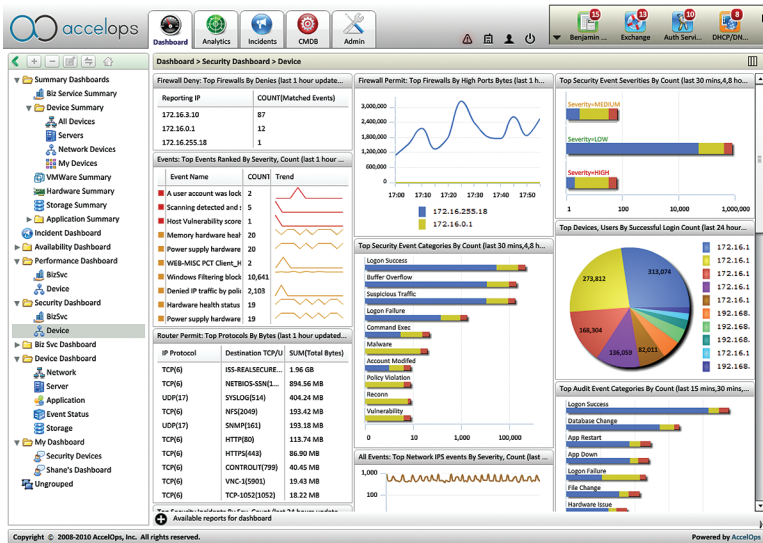
AccelOps provides security, performance and availability analysis on one screen

ered were larger companies, some Referentia staff had used software from AccelOps in the past. They had been impressed with the integrated SIEM, performance and availability monitoring capabilities that AccelOps offers, so they included the product in the short list of candidates that underwent rigorous testing.

The AccelOps monitoring application was architected from the ground up to monitor all networks, storage, devices, applications and users both on-premise in the cloud or a hybrid of both. It provides complete visibility across the entire physical and virtual IT infrastructure in a comprehensive single application. It seamlessly integrates security, performance and availability monitoring.

AccelOps monitors across the entire IT infrastructure in real time on a single pane of glass to quickly identify and resolve security incidents and performance bottlenecks. With multiple critical monitoring functions in a single application, AccelOps accelerates problem identification, helping IT to quickly determine the appropriate corrective response.

AccelOps provided several distinct advantages that were important to Referentia. Its cross-domain visibility and patented real-time event correlation make it possible for Referentia to rapidly detect and respond to issues to maintain a vigilant security posture and meet stringent Service-Level Agreements (SLAs) across critical infrastructure for customers.

AccelOps scales readily and can be run entirely on virtual machines in the public cloud that can be easily added or reduced as the number of monitored events changes. Because of AccelOps' unique Amazon Web Services (AWS) cloud integration, Referentia has been able to deploy AccelOps entirely within Amazon's EC2. AccelOps provides superior monitoring and far more insight into cloud OS-level and application-level metrics by collecting granular, real-time log and event information from inside the EC2 infrastructure rather than using Amazon's CloudWatch.

"We were the first MSP company to deploy 100 percent in the cloud with AccelOps and the company was great in getting us everything we needed," Giandomenico said. "They helped us troubleshoot and got everything working. Their responsiveness gave us confidence that we would make good long-term partners."

Bringing a new customer onboard is quick and easy with AccelOps. Because the software was designed for managed service providers, it was easy to securely add customers into Referentia's multi-tenant environment and set them up to receive standard and customized dashboard views and reports in a matter of hours. AccelOps automatically discovers and initiates monitoring on all devices and applications for the customer.

"The AccelOps intuitive interface and dashboards converge all of the elements we need to see in a way that makes sense," Giandomenico said. "It's very flexible and makes it easy to show the summary impact of a router failure incident on business processes to a customer executive, and at the same time allow security analysts to review log records on a daily basis for PCI compliance."

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THE RESULT: Referentia successfully launched managed security and network services business as a 100 percent cloud-based solution. Maximum functionality, flexibility and scalability with minimal cost achieved using integrated SIEM, performance and availability software that operates completely in the cloud

Referentia has successfully established its MSP business and now offers customers a full range of cyber security and data center services for critical infrastructure, from consulting, through solutions and managed services. This allows the company to grow by expanding the value it offers to organizations involved in sectors such as financial services, healthcare, hospitality, Internet Service Providers, and local and state governments that are mandated by regulation.

Referentia has accomplished this strategic business expansion without undertaking unnecessary capital expenditure and risk by building its services on the AccelOps integrated SIEM, performance and availability monitoring platform deployed entirely in Amazon's EC2. The company can scale effectively and add customers rapidly, as needed, leveraging the most up-to-date technology and flexible procurement and licensing.

Because AccelOps operates in the cloud and provides greater visibility and efficiency than combining multiple, single-function SIEM and monitoring tools, Referentia can maintain its competitive edge and cost advantage. It has been able to extend beyond security monitoring and offer customers comprehensive network monitoring services as well, without additional investment.

"We were trying to get into managed services," Giandomenico said. "From a cost perspective, we wanted to get into the game, but wanted to minimize our capital outlays. Our model is to off-load SIEM as a Service and provide managed network services for the customer. Combining cloud and AccelOps fits this. Managed services are becoming a greater part of Referentia's business as they become accepted as the most cost-effective way to ensure a secure and efficient critical infrastructure that enables business operations. Customers are trying to do more with less and don't have the expertise or full-time staff, so it makes sense to access SIEM and monitoring as a service."

About AccelOps

AccelOps provides analytics-driven IT Operations Management for cloud and virtualized infrastructures. The virtual appliance software manages security, network performance and compliance, all on a single screen. AccelOps automatically discovers, analyzes and automates IT issues in machine and big data across organizations' data centers and cloud resources, spanning servers, storage, networks, security, applications and users. AccelOps' patented analytics engine with cross-correlation sends real-time alerts when deviations occur that indicate a security or performance-impacting event. The AccelOps platform scales seamlessly and provides unmatched delivery of proactive security and operational intelligence, allowing organizations to be more responsive and competitive as they expand their IT capabilities. For details, visit **www.accelops.com.**

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