

Tales from the front: Microchip chooses Netli to serve up Web content fast

How Microchip accelerated delivery of Web info to its customers

■ BY CAROLYN DUFFY MARSAN

How best to boost your Web site performance without spending big bucks building out data centers around the globe? That was the problem that drove semiconductor manufacturer Microchip to sign on with start-up Netli's application delivery network services.

Microchip, in Chandler, Ariz., was having a difficult time providing fast access to product and ordering information on its e-commerce site, which is used by thousands of designers of electronics gear worldwide. Microchip, an \$800 million company, uses a data center at its headquarters to deliver and manage its dynamic Internet content.

"The further you got away from the source of our content, the worse your issues of latency became," explains Doug Guilbeau, director of sales and Internet applications for Microchip. "Web pages that might have been presented here in a second, were presented in five, six, seven, even eight seconds the further away you were."

The Web site's performance was particularly slow in Asia. "Customers in our fastest growing region in the world couldn't use the site because it was too slow," Guilbeau says.

Microchip considered several options to speed up its Web site performance including caching services or opening data centers around the world to house content closer to users. Caching services wouldn't work because the content on Microchip.com is too dynamic and opening additional data centers would be too expensive.

"The best other alternative when you have dynamically generated content is to put servers and locations closer to users," Guilbeau says. "You have to establish data center infra-

structure, hire staff and acquire hardware. You deal with the administrative nightmare of trying to disseminate the content. As you grow as an organization and you're trying to scale up, that's not going to work."

So instead, Microchip signed a year-long contract with Netli, a specialized ISP that offers accelerated delivery of dynamic, Web-based applications. Netli has a global overlay network and data centers throughout the world that deliver dynamic content close to end users. Customers have Netli appliances at their sites to direct content to Netli's network.

"We don't require plug-ins. We don't require any changes to applications or changes to our customers' infrastructures," explains Gary Messiana, CEO of Netli. "We've incorporated a lot of the technology that customers would need to purchase from disparate vendors including smart routing and compression."

Immediately after migrating to Netli's service last November, Microchip began seeing improvements in its Web site performance. Microchip uses two of Netli's services: its flagship NetLightning service and SSL-AT, which accelerates SSL-based applications.

"In Taiwan, Web page time would take six to eight seconds, while it would take a second to a second and a half in Chandler," Guilbeau says. "Now, when you buy our products in Taiwan, the Web site's performance is equal to being here in Chandler."

Indeed, Microchip's sales are up as much as 75% in some regions since migrating to Netli.

"How much of that is associated with the technology, I don't know," Guilbeau says. "Some of it's due to the business services and the content we offer. The key thing is that the technology is not getting in the way. The laten-

cy issue of the Internet is not hurting us."

Guilbeau says the transition to Netli's services went smoothly. "It was a pretty seamless implementation," he says. "They help you implement the appliance in your configuration and install it. You do DNS changes to allow the routing for the URL path to be intercepted by Netli. Then Netli works when you turn it on. There was no disruption in service or delivery of content at all."

Guilbeau is now evaluating Netli's service for an internal CRM application that Microchip employees access from 40 offices worldwide. He strongly recommends Netli's services to other network executives dealing with dynamic Web content and a global audience.

"I recommend it to every peer I meet," he says. He offers the following advice: "You want to do your homework and test the service to make sure your applications work...I wanted to make sure it would work for a sustained period of time, and it took us two months to prove it out."

Microchip is a typical customer for Netli, which supports 150 transaction-based Web applications for enterprise customers including Toyota, Nokia and HP. Netli's service-level agreements guarantee the performance of Web-enabled applications across the world. Netli's services run between \$8,000 and \$15,000 per month.

"We're having a lot of success with companies doing business in India and China," Messiana says. "We can support applications on a very large global scale as if every single one of those users were local." ■

