

MET PROCESSORS - FIREBURST

Background Information

You work for Inveco Bank, a medium-sized investment bank specializing in the re-investment of specialized funds, initialization and execution of turnkey projects and subsequent investment strategies. Every year Inveco Bank achieves the enviable feat that they deliver an above average growth in various business areas compared to their rivals in the rest of the world. This organization also has the unique situation whereby it is head quartered in Sydney, Australia with smaller regions in the USA, EMEA and Asia. Inveco Bank is heavily reliant on its expertise of investing funds in carefully selected and highly profitable equity markets and joint ventures. It also prides itself that it is one of the few financial institutions that is not concerned about single digit returns in the financial market, but is rather concerned maintaining double digits returns on investment strategies. To maintain this objective, Inveco Bank relies heavily on "state of the art" technology and they always employ the best and most effective technology and investment software across the globe.

Inveco Bank are well aware of the latest developments regarding investment tools and endeavor to acquire whatever is needed to keep the critical edge over other investment agencies and financial institutions.

The Problem

On Wednesday morning you received a call from a concerned Service Operations Director of the IT Division, stating that since the PC software upgrade to Java 1.05 was commissioned over the last week-end, he has had numerous complaints about network disruptions across all the divisions of Inveco Bank in all the regions. It seemed to be an enterprise wide problem and it must have been something we initiated over the weekend. The problem started on Monday morning when the investment staff logged-on to their normal broker provider websites such as Fireburst, E-Express and Mango. It seems as if all goes well when they first log-on to the provider side, but they get dropped off shortly thereafter. You promised the Service Ops Director to investigate the disruption and report back within 2 hours.

It was difficult to get the correct timeline of events that took place over the last few days and it necessitated you looking back further into the past to understand the complete situation. After talking to a host of complaining staff and some of your own technical experts you came to the conclusion that the problem is only happening on the Fireburst site. Two weeks earlier Fireburst upgraded their site and you received confirmation that the bank never had this kind of problem with the earlier version of the Fireburst website. The problem definitely started on Monday morning, September 2nd at start of business in Australia, United Kingdom and the USA. We are still waiting for Asia to experience this problem situation. Up to now Asia IT staff only had a few of their users complaining, and they did not think that it was an issue at all.

More Information

Upon further investigation you've managed to determine an exact location and extent of the problem situation. The following table gives an accurate indication of the nature of this problem.

REGION	ANZ	ASIA	UK	USA
# of PC's affected	All	None	All	All
Browser	Internet Explorer & Netscape	Netscape & Firefox	Internet Explorer & Netscape	Internet Explorer, Firefox & Netscape
Platform	LAN: Java 1.05	ADSL: Java 1.05	LAN: Java 1.05	LAN: Java 1.05
Proxy server	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Jaguar Firewall	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Windows Firewall	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Interface Card	3 COM	Dell	3 COM	3 COM & Dell

You interviewed various staff members who are experiencing this problem. They were all complaining about the frustration of doing their work and anytime during that on-line situation with Fireburst they could experience a dropping of the service. The most dangerous situation is when they are in the middle of a transaction when the drop takes place. At this stage the user does not know whether the transaction has been affected or not, they then need to contact the broker by telephone and verify their transaction. This has a severe effect on productivity and the bank is unnecessarily exposed in situations like this.

Your first priority was to determine if this was an isolated problem with one application only and you've confirmed that nobody has experienced any problems with comparable applications such as E-Express or Mango. While the programmers were busy with the Java upgrade over the weekend, they also upgraded the Netscape Browser to version 4.2. They upgraded all PC's on the various LANS, and then they also provided the new Netscape version to individual PC users who are not on the LAN, to upgrade in their own time. Everyone was very impressed and happy about the upgrade to Fireburst 2.0 because this gave all users access to many more features than before.

Many of the users explained to you that they would have expected the typical faults you would normally experience with upgrades, such as logging in and freezing in the application at certain stages. None of this happened and this problem is now in existence for at least 3 days and the problem never disappeared. In fact, the users are constantly expecting the application to drop unexpectedly during any transaction.

You think it could possibly be the difficult task of configuration of the various drivers with such an integrated system. It could be the network, LAN, Java 1.05 or even the browser drivers. We had various upgrades such as new websites, firewalls, Windows Service Pack 3 and even the two upgrades over the last weekend offered by Netscape to version 4.2 and Java to version 1.05.