



SUMMARY

Carlsberg, the world-famous Danish beer producer, is using Columbitech Mobile VPN to provide all its drivers with secure, persistent wireless access from the road to the SAP Enterprise Resource Planning system.

CHALLENGES

With a fast-growing global operation, it was critical to Carlsberg to ensure that customers received exactly what they ordered and that orders were delivered on time. To accomplish this, Carlsberg was investing in a new mobile computing system, based on the Intermec 760 series, running Windows CE. This mobile computer enabled real-time communication with Carlsberg's 1,200 delivery trucks in the Nordic countries of Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland.

The handheld devices supported both GSM/GPRS and 801.11b wireless LAN, but every time a device switched networks or moved out of coverage, the device lost the connection to the application and the users had to restart the application and authenticate themselves again. This caused interruptions to the drivers' regular work, and sometimes data was lost. Additionally, the SAP Enterprise Resource Planning system was data intensive, resulting in slow performance over the GPRS network, causing frustration among the users.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

- Security
- Seamless roaming
- Session persistence
- Ease of use
- Performance

Carlsberg sought a solution that would provide secure remote access to its corporate network and would solve the connectivity issues by handling network transitions and coverage gaps seamlessly in the background, without causing drivers any extra hassle. Furthermore, Carlsberg was looking for a solution that would offer optimal performance in a wireless environment with limited bandwidth.

SOLUTION

Columbitech Mobile VPN offered the reliability and simplicity that Carlsberg was looking for and was provided to Carlsberg by the European integrator Consafe Logistics. Today the VPN software is installed on more than 1,200 Intermec mobile computers used by Carlsberg's drivers throughout the Nordic countries.

With the new system in place, drivers have all necessary delivery information at hand as they visit customers. Remote access to the SAP system allows them to update delivery status, report variations, and in real-time update the information in the host system. Additionally, drivers can print delivery notes or invoices to give to customers immediately after the deliveries are completed, eliminating all paperwork.

“Columbitech Mobile VPN met all the criteria that we looked for as we evaluated different options for remote access to connect our truck fleet to SAP,” said Mary Irwin, project manager at Carlsberg. “Columbitech delivers security and application persistence, and also enhances the performance of the GPRS connection, eliminating a lot of frustration for our drivers while making the total solution more efficient.”

Columbitech Mobile VPN ensures seamless transition between the various networks, maintaining persistent connection to the application. The VPN client handles the log-in and authentication in the background, allowing drivers to report back in real time without worrying about the network connection. The session-resume mechanisms in the Columbitech solution enable users to remain logged on even if they experience network problems or move out of network coverage. Once the wireless device regains the network signal, the connection to the corporate network will automatically resume and so will any active application data transfer.

The support for seamless roaming between the cellular and Wi-Fi networks enables the mobile device to automatically utilize the most cost-efficient network available. The mobile device automatically roams to Carlsberg’s Wi-Fi network as soon as it is available.

Not only does Columbitech Mobile VPN provide data security and persistent connection, but it is built to provide optimal performance over low-bandwidth wireless networks. Data is compressed before it is encrypted and transmitted, allowing data-intensive applications, such as SAP, to run more efficiently.

IMPLEMENTATION

Consafe Logistics used Columbitech’s application development kit to integrate the VPN client functionality into the route-planning application. Accordingly the VPN software is

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completely transparent to the drivers and does not impact the workflow. The integrated application approach enabled a cost-efficient deployment and makes maintenance and support of the software easier to manage. Carlsberg uses the VPN Gateway in combination with the Windows-based VPN Server.

ADVANTAGES

- Productivity has increased thanks to persistent access to the route planning application.
- Drivers can focus on their task without worrying about losing data or access to the application.
- Advanced data compression has improved the application performance over GPRS.
- The device automatically roams to the most cost-efficient network available.

