



Intel Gigabit Case Study

Camille Fournet SA,
Tergnier, France

Camille Fournet
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Implementing Intel® Gigabit Ethernet allows Camille Fournet to meet tight order and delivery timescales through much-increased data access and processing speeds

Camille Fournet relies on Gigabit Ethernet for faster access to its computer-aided production management system and more efficient data-processing.

Challenge

Network congestion was preventing efficient processing of the data associated with Camille Fournet's orders and users were finding access to the computer-aided production management (CAPM) system too slow. Customers were also experiencing issues in access to up-to-date order information over the extranet. To overcome these problems and ensure that order timescales could more easily be met, the company needed to upgrade its 100Mbps network to offer higher levels of performance. At the same time, concerns over the security of communications and production information in the event of a problem could be addressed.

Solution

Bring the network up to Gigabit performance by replacing the CAPM system and extranet servers with new hardware comprising Intel® housings, motherboards and Gigabit Ethernet server adapters, and installing a new switch. Assure additional security through the use of two Intel Gigabit Ethernet adapter cards in each server and the provision of a standby production server.

Benefits

Reduction in network congestion has greatly eased the flow of information across the network. This in turn has freed the company's servers to process data more quickly. Productivity has been improved by enabling faster and more reliable access to the CAPM system that is crucial to the order-fulfilment process.

Camille Fournet is a specialist manufacturer of high-quality, exclusive leather watchstraps and watch cases. Established over half a century ago, the company is based in Tergnier, north-east of Paris, and has 180 employees. Its products have a worldwide reputation and are sold via retail outlets in Europe, Hong Kong, Japan and the US.

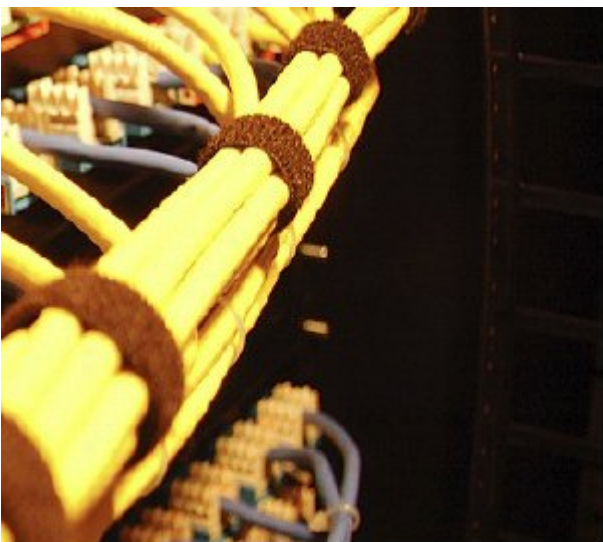
The low speed of Camille Fournet's network meant that the large volumes of data associated with its manufacturing orders were being processed too slowly. The resulting network congestion was also hampering employees' access to the SQL-based computer-aided production management (CAPM) system, which risked making it harder to meet the short delivery timescales that are often required.

By upgrading the network from 100Mbps to 1Gbps and installing new server hardware, the company has seen clear improvements in data-processing times, and users no longer experience delays when accessing the CAPM system. This means that staff productivity and server utilisation have been enhanced, and that order delivery deadlines are more easily met.

Eliminate congestion and improve network performance

Camille Fournet relies on a combination of craftsmanship and cutting-edge technology to produce its luxury leather goods. Manufacturing a watchstrap involves some 60 stages, and delivery timescales are often tight. It is therefore vital that all the data associated with the company's computer-aided production management (CAPM) system can be processed and accessed efficiently.

The SQL-based CAPM system is hosted on its own server, and over 40 of the company's employees across the production, administration and sales departments depend on it throughout the day. As well as data about manufacturing orders, the CAPM system holds product specification sheets, and provides details on the status of orders during both the production and delivery phases. In addition, more than 30 major customers around the world have extranet access to a copy of the same data.



By 2002 Camille Fournet's IT Director, Pascal Lemée, realised that the network had to be upgraded. A data transfer rate of 100Mbps was no longer sufficient to support the number of users requiring CAPM system access and the volumes of data being processed at peak times. Upgrades were required for the internal production network environment as well as to improve customer access to up-to-date information mirrored on the extranet server. At the same time, redundancy could be built into key elements of the system to provide additional security in communications and production management information in the event of failure.

Moving to Gigabit Ethernet capability

For Lemée it was clear that upgrading the network from 100Mbps to

1Gbps was the best and most cost-effective solution. "We briefly considered installing a fibre-optic network," he recalls, "but it would have been too expensive. Besides which, Ethernet (over copper) is a very familiar technology that my team and I are comfortable with. We also knew we would not have to change our existing CAT 5 cabling in order to be able to use Gigabit Ethernet."

Reliability and improved speed were the key advantages Lemée was looking for. "We realised that to take full advantage of the higher-speed network for accessing the CAPM system, we would need to replace the server hardware and install Gigabit Ethernet adapter cards in the new servers," he says.

Lemée built the new servers himself, working with a local reseller with whom the company had an ongoing relationship for the past ten years. "We always use branded components," says Lemée, "and a large proportion of those we choose are made by Intel, including server housings and motherboards in addition to network adapter cards. We've always found Intel to be completely reliable, and have never been disappointed with its products."

Improved performance and server redundancy

The Gigabit Ethernet solution was installed in just a few days over the Christmas holiday, avoiding disruption to the company's activities. Because the CAPM application is business critical, Lemée built both a live production server, and a duplicate standby server that can be implemented in the event of a failure or problem affecting the production server. A third identical server, which is a mirror of the production server, is used to provide extranet access to order status information for Camille Fournet's major customers.

Each server includes a 10/100 LOM connection, and two Intel Gigabit Ethernet adapter cards. The production server communicates with its extranet mirror using the 10/100 LOM connection. This link is completely separate from the connection between the CAPM application and the LAN, which runs at a full 1Gbps via one of the Gigabit Ethernet adapters. The second Gigabit Ethernet adapter provides redundancy, so that data transfer and application access across the LAN can continue in the event of a problem with the primary adapters.

Faster data-processing and enhanced productivity

Since increasing the speed of the network to 1Gbps, installing the new switch and replacing the CAPM system servers, Lemée says users are finding they have quicker and more reliable access to the CAPM application, and data can be processed much more swiftly.

"All the elements of the solution work together to bring us the improvements we were looking to achieve," concludes Lemée. "Productivity has been enhanced, and it is now much easier to meet tight manufacturing and delivery timescales."

There has been no need to bring the backup server into use, yet, but testing shows that if required, switchover can be achieved in under 30 minutes.

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