

SHOMITI AT WORK


Exodus Keeps at the
Top of its Game with
Shomiti's Explorer
Fast Ethernet
Protocol Analyzer



Exodus Communications keeps the fast balls flying and data flowing for a San Francisco Bay Area major league baseball team with the help of Shomiti's Explorer Fast Ethernet protocol analyzer. Exodus Communications, a Santa Clara, CA-based Internet data center company

houses Internet and Intranet servers for organizations like this successful baseball team with the promise of 100 percent reliability and "never miss a hit" service. This way the baseball team and other organizations can focus on web content development and marketing while Exodus takes on connectivity, performance and stability.

But taking on these responsibilities means Exodus must build and manage state-of-the-art data centers and a network that provides error-free connections to the Internet. With salaries for networking talent at an all time high, successful expansion for Exodus meant finding a way to maximize its resources.

A photograph of the Shomiti Explorer, a portable 10/100 Ethernet analyzer. It is a white, rectangular device with a dark front panel. The front panel features a small display screen on the left and several ports on the right. The device is shown from a slightly elevated angle, resting on a dark surface.

Shomiti Explorer:
Portable 10/100 Ethernet Analyzer
plus Monitor System

Shomiti Systems provided the answer with its Explorer portable protocol analyzer. Using Explorer's remote management capabilities, Exodus can debug and troubleshoot data centers across the country from its primary location.

The Exodus Network

Exodus' network is built on Cisco 7500 series routers and Catalyst 5500 switches using Fast Ethernet and FDDI on the LAN and ATM and OC3 for the WAN. A total of 250 customers and thousands of servers are connected to the Exodus network with either 10Mbps or 100Mbps connections. A Cisco Catalyst 5500 switch hosts the server connections and is attached with multiple Fast Ethernet segments to various Internet backbones including Pacific Bell NAP, Mae West, Mae East, NASA Ames, Sprint NAP, Ameritech AADS, private peering with UUNET and PSI, and Palo Alto Internet Exchange. When a request from a fan of the baseball team is sent to an ISP, for example, it speeds through the Exodus network to the team's server and back to the fan at home to deliver the latest batting averages.

Using the Shomiti Explorer, Exodus remotely manages its network in the New Jersey data center by connecting the two analyzer ports of the Explorer to two ports on Catalyst 5500's. Data from each client's sub-network is then directed to the designated monitoring port on the Catalyst 5500 and then back to the Explorer, enabling easy access to client data for analysis and troubleshooting. Typically, the Exodus network manager is looking for broadcast storms, errors and collisions when isolating a performance problem reported by a customer.

In the event that the network in question is not connected to the Catalyst 5500's, such as the Exodus corporate network that sits behind the firewall, an operator at the New Jersey data center can plug the Explorer directly into the network in question. According to B.V. Jagadeesh, co-founder and vice president of engineering for Exodus Communications, "Our data centers are manned on a 24x7 basis so if a problem occurs, remotely managing and troubleshooting our customers networks is as easy as connecting a cable."

Exodus selected the Shomiti solution because it was the only product able to capture every packet of Fast Ethernet traffic. "When you're trying to guarantee 100 percent up-time, it's critical that no packets are lost when debugging a problem," said Jagadeesh.

When Exodus is not using Explorer for troubleshooting, they're gunning for the highest level of connectivity for their clients by proactively monitoring ports to insure collision-free networking.

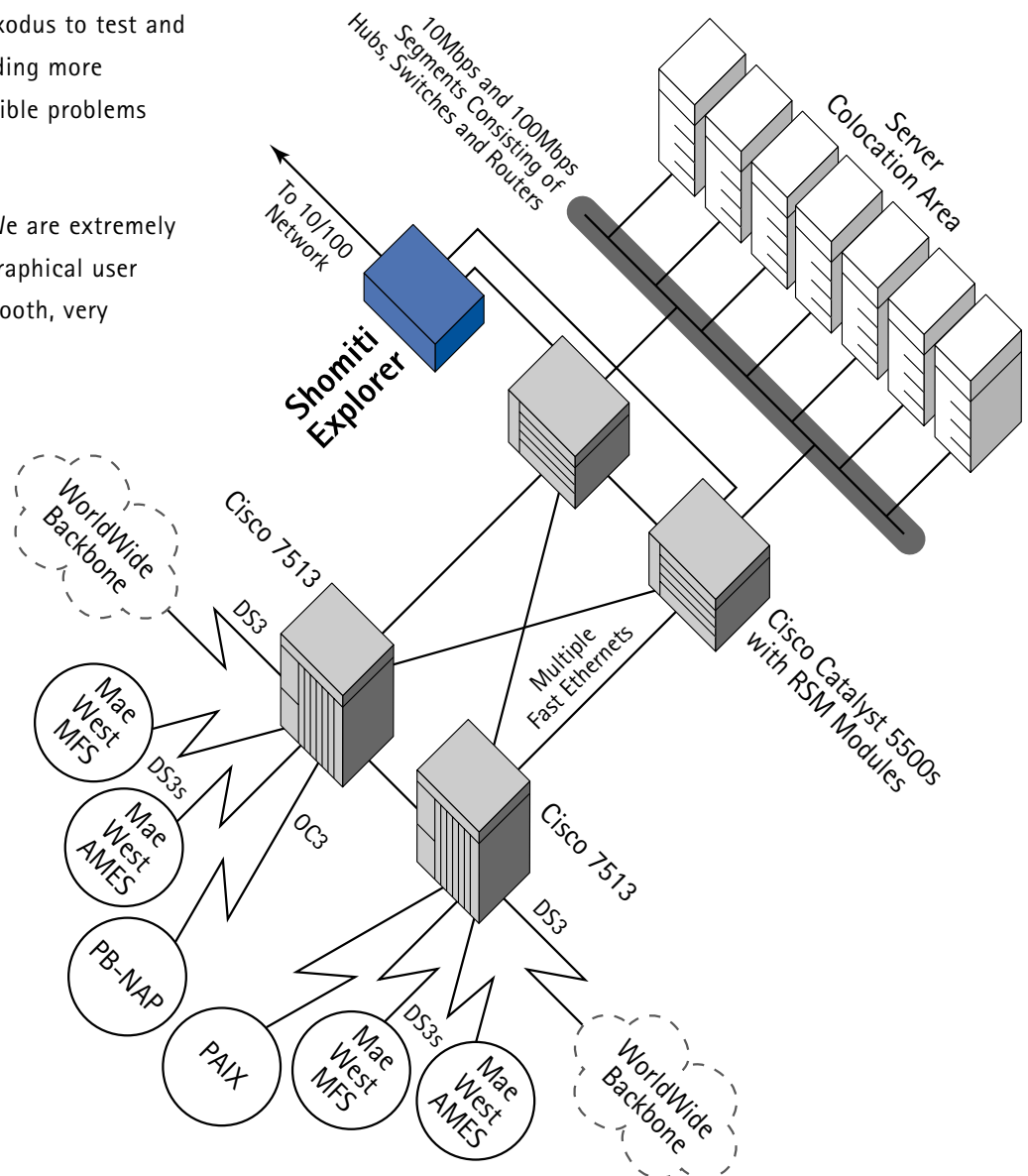
"From the moment we installed Explorer, we saw an improvement in network performance," said Jagadeesh. "During installation we discovered that one of our core backbone switches had lost the address of the host and started broadcasting all packets for that host throughout the network. This dragged performance to one-tenth of normal. We were able to fix the problem immediately. Without Explorer we could not have solved the problem."

Future Plans

As Exodus continues to grow and open new data centers around the world, plans are to use Shomiti's Explorer at each site to report bugs and diagnostics to the central management station in Santa Clara. Jagadeesh also feels that the entire product line from Shomiti will enable Exodus to test and launch new products providing more important insight into possible problems within the network.

According to Jagadeesh, "We are extremely impressed with Shomiti's graphical user interface. It's extremely smooth, very intuitive and user-friendly.

Anyone can use the product based on the interface. In fact, one of our engineers used Network General products in the past and was reluctant to try something new. Within ten minutes he changed his mind."



Exodus Communications is a three year-old Santa Clara, California-based start-up offering its customers a way to achieve a sustained competitive advantage by providing world class Internet systems and network management solutions through globally distributed Internet Data Centers.

Clients such as Oracle, Progressive Networks, Blizzard Entertainment, HotBot, Hot Mail, WebChat, Activision, Sierra On-Line, Software.net, and National Semiconductor have moved Net servers to Exodus data centers in order to focus on content and marketing while trusting Exodus's high-performance network to fulfill all Internet requests.

Exodus currently has data centers nationwide with plans to open centers in Japan and the U.K.



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