UNIPEC
CASE STUDY

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About UNIPEC

UNIPEC is a crude-oil buying and shipping company, and the UK trading arm of Chinese state-owned SINOPEC – the company responsible for supplying many of the petrol pumps in south China. From its Shephard's Bush office, the UNIPEC team undertakes commodities trading as well as managing shipping and operations around the transportation of cargo.

The Challenge

Since moving into its London office in 2010, UNIPEC has always demanded a lot from its internet connection. Working with financial trading applications such as Reuters and Bloomberg, the company required a robust back-up connection to maintain operation in case of any downtime, and so had paired a BT connection with a Luminet Wireless link for resilience.

KEY BENEFITS DELIVERED

1) Complete redesign of company computer system for added resilience

2) Fully diverse 1GB active/active network configuration connecting the two separate data centres

3) Future plans to move all voice traffic onto the network

Luminet

In 2014, John Hurworth who is the IT Manager at UNIPEC, decided it was time to make big changes. He explains:

"Up until 2014, all of our computer systems were on site which meant that all of our dependencies were in the same building. We decided that we needed to move our computer systems into colocation data centres, connected with diverse circuits for full resilience. Using two data centre locations and two wholly separate telecoms connections would significantly reduce our risk exposure."

It is normal to find commodities trading companies in the City of London. The area has lots of powerful cables already installed under the roads, serving the intensive requirements of the companies nearby. But UNIPEC's office is in Shepherds Bush – in an area classified as residential and not only are the network connections inferior to the City, buy laying any new cables would cause significant disruption and require lengthy council approval.

The Approach

Hurworth looked into all the options available in his search for diverse links into his two new colocation data centres. He comments:

"I already had diverse primary and back-up network connections into the office, using Luminet's Wireless network as the back-up, but now I wanted an active/active network set up. I looked into all the options for fully diverse connections but ultimately a Fibre-only solution needed two different Fibre lines running under the road and we just didn't have that in our area. A dig would be costly and cause a minimum of six months delay on the project. It started to become obvious that upgrading our Luminet connection might be the best option."

Hurworth spoke to the Luminet team to investigate boosting their 2MB back-up Wireless connection to a much greater 1GB circuit.

"Our Luminet back-up network had got us out of jail on a number of occasions, so we were confident in the technology and knew the team there to be both fast and professional. In order to upgrade the connection to 1GB, Luminet needed to replace the existing antenna on the roof of UNIPEC's building, a process which went smoothly without a hitch."
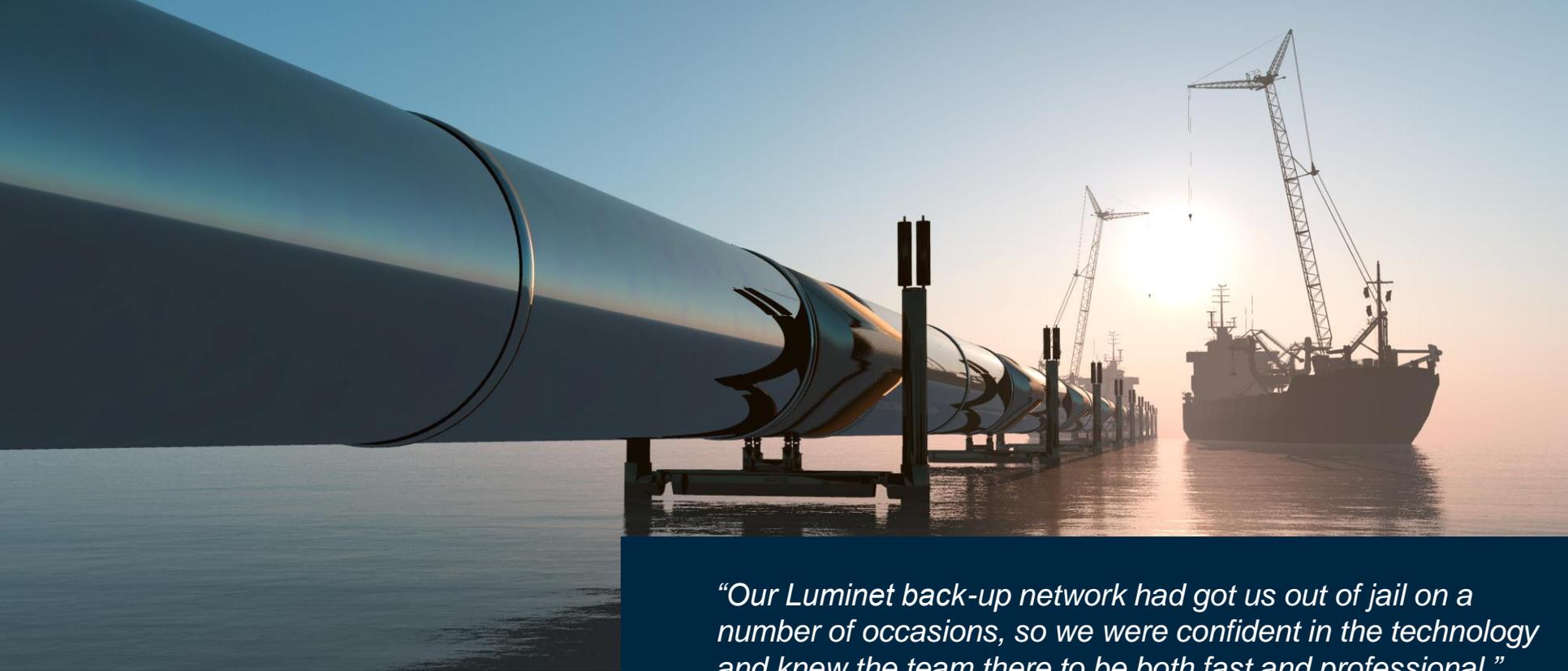
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- John Hurworth, IT Manager at UNIPEC

The Results

UNIPEC now has its active/active diverse network circuits, using a BT Fibre line and Luminet's 1GB resilient Wireless link. Both networks are in use all of the time, with a load balancer distributing traffic between the two connections and data centres.

All of UNIPEC's trading and market data comes through internet services such as Bloomberg and Reuters, and the networks carry this critical traffic alongside every other piece of internet traffic in and out of the company.

"The diverse network approach is completely hidden from our users – there is no reason for them to notice the difference as there is absolutely no degradation", said Hurworth. "Even for those of us on the networks team, looking closely at the results, we have seen no latency issues at all, and no outages what-so-ever."

With the remodelling of UNIPEC's computer systems such a success, Hurworth is plotting the next improvement and planning to move all voice traffic over to IP on his new network connections within the next six months.

Hurworth concludes, "I am very confident that the next stage of the plan – for voice traffic to join the rest of our data on our network – will go as smoothly as the previous stages have. Perhaps if we were located in the City I would have had two cables ready and waiting for us under the road, but the overall result of our approach is just as successful and completely avoided any digging!"

Summary of key benefits:

✅ Complete redesign of company computer systems for added resilience.

✅ Fully diverse 1GB active/active network configuration connecting the two separate data centres.

✅ Future plans to move all voice traffic onto the network.

About Luminet

Luminet provides organisations with the Connectivity, Communications, Computing and Security services that are essential to all businesses, but difficult to find without an enterprise budget. Understanding that IT requirements do not always fit stereotypical business size judgements, Luminet's service suite is powerful and flexible, with the SLAs and customer support that every business should expect.

With innovative levels of intelligence, Luminet's technology allows game-changing service assurance, application control, optimisation and even new business models. Bit, byte, SIM or IP level measurement, charging, prioritisation and authentication, together with best-value, industry-leading SLAs, and ISO9001 and ISO27000 certifications make Luminet the obvious choice.

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