

GoDaddy Goes Big with Kentik to Optimize Its Global Network



CATEGORY

- Internet services provider

CHALLENGE

- Consolidating and integrating multiple network monitoring platforms
- Maximizing network efficiency, refining service pricing models, and optimizing customer satisfaction

SOLUTION

- The Kentik Network Intelligence Platform for traffic engineering, capacity planning, forensics and DDoS detection

RESULTS

- Real-time, easy-to-understand network intelligence drawn from global backbone traffic
- Insights on network performance shared with non-technical departments within the company
- A single source of network intelligence to replace multiple, disparate tools
- Valuable what-if analysis to maximize investment decisions

Overview


A leading global provider of domain registration and web-hosting services, GoDaddy has standardized on Kentik to gain real-time intelligence on network performance, strengthen its defenses against persistent DDoS attacks, improve capacity planning, and optimize its global network to deliver exceptional customer experiences and superior return on investment.

Situation

GoDaddy is the world's largest registrar of internet domain names, and a leading provider of web-hosting and other digital services focused on small, entrepreneurial businesses. The company has more than 19 million customers, manages over 78 million domain names, employs over 10,000 team members and operates from some 50 locations worldwide. The company's goal is to help small businesses be successful by providing them with advice and tools that include websites, email, WordPress, and sales/marketing programs.

GoDaddy has expanded rapidly in recent years, through both organic growth and nearly 30 mergers and acquisitions. Each acquired company has brought its own network infrastructure — including disparate network management tools — which must be integrated into the larger enterprise. This has posed a challenge for the team that manages GoDaddy's global network, which includes numerous data centers in North America, Europe and Asia.

Malte von dem Hagen, director of the global backbone for GoDaddy, heads a team of 15 people whose mission is to provide connectivity between data centers and the internet and between the data centers themselves. Von dem Hagen came to GoDaddy in 2017 through an acquisition, so he was familiar with the challenge of integrating multiple network management platforms. "One of our highest priorities at that time was to consolidate and integrate these diverse systems," he says. "Some were on-premise and vendor-specific, which brought the challenge of vendor lock-in. Others were cloud-based

A network diagram consisting of blue dots connected by thin blue lines, representing a network topology, set against a dark blue background.

and supposedly vendor independent. It was a big challenge to manage. So, we wanted a tool or service that would allow us to consolidate and integrate critical network management functions that span traffic engineering, forensics and DDoS protection — not only from a technical perspective but also in terms of migration, ease of use and cost.”

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Solution

GoDaddy had been using the Kentik Network Intelligence Platform to a limited extent — in parallel with various legacy on-premise network monitoring appliances — before von dem Hagen arrived. Fortunately, he was already familiar with Kentik after attending key technical conferences such as the North American Network Operators’ Group (NANOG). So, he participated in a technical evaluation team whose analysis concluded that Kentik should become GoDaddy’s global standard for network monitoring and intelligence. He says there were several reasons behind the decision:

“First and foremost, it is just a great tool. We knew that based on direct feedback from our network engineers who use it on a daily basis. It has a super-intuitive interface that is easy to use. And the fact that it is a cloud service makes it easy to integrate new acquisitions. We don’t have to buy and install appliances; we just connect the devices to the cloud. And from a cost perspective, we can grow incrementally at whatever pace we need without making big investments to add a new service or location.”

For almost a year, GoDaddy operated Kentik in parallel with its legacy flow monitoring solution, and von dem Hagen says there was a dramatic difference. “We had used that product for seven years, and it still looked the same; almost no evolution. Kentik, in contrast, is at least two iterations more modern. It also was much faster in terms of time to insight — we achieved results in seconds instead of minutes.”

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Results

GoDaddy employs the Kentik Network Intelligence Platform for numerous use cases, including:

Traffic Engineering

“When you run a global network, gaining intelligence about traffic flows is vital. Kentik gives us insight on where traffic is coming from, where it’s going and how we can minimize costs. This is something we do every day.”

DDoS Protection

“Kentik is our global standard for detecting DDoS attacks. There isn’t a single minute in the day that we’re not attacked somewhere, so it’s crucial for us to have a reliable service to detect attacks and trigger mitigation measures.”

Troubleshooting

“If we do receive a complaint from a peer network or customer, Kentik gives us a clear visual representation of how traffic is flowing, as well as the level of detail that’s necessary to pinpoint a problem and resolve it quickly. This helps us deliver on SLAs, improve our traffic performance, and helps us be a good internet citizen.”

Capacity Planning

“The intelligence we get from Kentik helps us better estimate where and why we need more capacity. Greater information and insight lead to better planning, which leads to more efficient use of our resources and better service to customers.”

Forensics

“There are occasional instances where you have to know the context in which a specific event took place, and Kentik is very helpful when this need arises because they collect so much valuable data from so many sources.”

The network intelligence generated by Kentik contributes directly to improving the company’s financial performance. “We are always making decisions on how to allocate our resources for the best return on investment,” von dem Hagen notes, “and Kentik is a vital tool in this process. A good example is how we select peering partners and IP transit providers. With



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Kentik, we can perform what-if analyses to answer questions like: how much traffic can we expect on a specific line; is it worth establishing that link; and if we change a transit provider, what would be the impact on peer relationships?”

The ease of use of the Kentik platform means the insights it generates can be shared with other parts of the organization, especially non-technical departments like sales, marketing, finance, and customer service. “With the tools we used in the past, it would have been unthinkable to give access to non-technical users because they would have had zero clue how to use them. But with Kentik, we create a report, give them access to it anytime they want, and even add the ability for them to adjust the parameters and see the effects.”

Von dem Hagen also has praise for the people behind the Kentik product. “Even after years of being a customer, I still see evidence that they really care about us. One example is feature requests. When we ask for something to be added, we always get feedback right away. And even though we understand the Kentik team can never implement every customer request, when they do decide to add a feature we suggest, they deliver in a timely manner.”

Key Takeaways

GoDaddy uses the Kentik Network Intelligence Platform for several mission-critical use cases. As a result, the company takes advantage of the platform’s ease of use to gain a much deeper understanding of its complex global network and apply insights it gains to optimize network performance. In addition, GoDaddy maximizes the return on investments it makes in network operations, improves its security posture, and shares network intelligence with LOBs and other departments throughout the company.

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ABOUT KENTIK | Kentik® is the network intelligence platform for the connected world, trusted by leading digital enterprises and service providers. With Kentik, businesses eliminate the visibility and intelligence gaps associated with running dynamic and complex networks, and achieve greater network performance, reliability and security. The Kentik Network Intelligence Platform ingests diverse data streams from the internet, edge, cloud, data center and hybrid infrastructures and provides real-time visualizations and AIOps-powered insights and automation. Learn more at www.kentik.com.