

Gigamon Restores Network Visibility After Move to Microsoft Azure Cloud

“Performance is king” for the BARBRI Group — but that became difficult when visibility evaporated

AT A GLANCE

Customer

The BARBRI Group

Industry

Online legal education company serving roughly 75,000 student each year.

Business Challenge

Network visibility of cloud-based applications on Microsoft Azure.

Gigamon Solution

GigaSECURE® Cloud for Microsoft Azure

Customer Benefits

- Enhanced ability to conduct detailed analyses of network traffic and infrastructure health
- Better visibility to aid in planning and network design
- Testing ease of new tools without requiring network reconfiguration
- Access to NetFlow data to analyze traffic, especially when higher than expected

Introduction

The BARBRI Group companies meet the legal education, cyber skills education and specialized training needs of law students, attorneys, IT students and other professionals throughout their careers. BARBRI Bar Review, the company’s core offering, has helped more than 1.3 million lawyers around the world pass a U.S. bar exam. BARBRI’s business is highly seasonal, with summer and winter courses driving heavy server and bandwidth needs that subsequently go down during the off seasons.

The company previously maintained on-premises data centers built to handle these peak loads, but recently moved its infrastructure to the Microsoft Azure cloud platform. The move lets BARBRI adjust its resources to seasonal demand while saving millions of dollars in data center costs.

After the Move, Network Visibility Evaporated

In BARBRI’s business, “performance is king,” says BARBRI IT Director Mark Kaplan. “We’ll easily have 50,000 people connected in a single session, and we must be able to monitor that traffic to ensure everybody’s getting a good experience — no matter where they are in the world. The move to Azure suddenly made performance monitoring much more difficult.”

“We deployed Azure and realized we didn’t have what we needed in terms of network visibility,” he adds. “We were used to getting full transparency but suddenly couldn’t see things we’d always taken for granted.”

Solution: GigaSECURE® Cloud for Microsoft Azure

Specifically, BARBRI wanted to restore its ability to use Dynatrace, a Gigamon Technology Partner, for application performance monitoring. After searching for solutions, Kaplan heard about GigaSECURE® Cloud for Microsoft Azure, which acquires, optimizes and distributes selected traffic to tools, such as Dynatrace, and monitors Azure workloads.

The solution includes 3 key components:

- **G-vTAP agents:** Lightweight agents deployed on virtual machines, which filter and mirror traffic and send mirrored traffic to the visibility tier
- **GigaVUE V-Series:** Visibility nodes deployed in each VNet that aggregate, select, optimize and distribute traffic
- **GigaVUE-FM:** Single pane-of-glass orchestration and management across entire platform — on-premises and in Azure

Migration was a snap. “I don’t want to say it was stupid simple, but it really was,” says Kaplan. “It was the easiest network tool I’ve ever seen that had to be set up.”

Results

- Restored visibility: With GigaSECURE Cloud for Microsoft Azure up and running, BARBRI's ability to monitor its network infrastructure was restored, to the great relief of Kaplan and his team. "When diagnosing problems, we tend to drill down quite deep — more than the average company," says Kaplan. "Without having visibility into the network, we had to do a lot of guessing. Now we don't have to guess."
- Enhanced planning and design: BARBRI also found that GigaSECURE Cloud for Microsoft Azure helped them go beyond reacting to network problems and let them plan ahead. "It's helped us in our design and planning — to spec out servers and other activities like that," says Nick Capatina, Network Architect at BARBRI. "It's a whole new ballgame when you're trying to build and design around things that you lack visibility and control over."
- Ability to experiment with new tools — without affecting production application: In addition, GigaSECURE Cloud for Microsoft Azure can feed data from the cloud network into a wide variety of tools, which has helped BARBRI experiment with new tools.
- "It's there waiting for us to plug tools into it without the need for modifications that could impact our production environment," says Kaplan. "You can use it with whatever might come out tomorrow — or maybe some other tool that you hadn't heard of yet."
- Access to NetFlow data: Before the cloud move, Capatina says that NetFlow data helped the team analyze traffic, especially during times of higher-than-expected traffic. "NetFlow tells us exactly the traffic going between two end points and what protocol and bandwidth it's using — and that's on a real-time basis."
- "It's impossible, however, to get that data from the cloud," he says. "Gigamon lets us get that data and send it to other tools for visibility, which gives us back the control of the network, a feature that had been lost handing it over to the cloud."

Kaplan concludes by saying that he's telling his peers that "if they're moving to the cloud, there's a big hole that they cannot fill unless they have Gigamon."

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About BARBRI

The BARBRI Group companies meet the legal education needs of law students and attorneys throughout their careers. At the core of the BARBRI Group Companies is BARBRI Bar Review, which has helped more than 1.3 million lawyers around the world pass the bar. Innovative testing and learning technologies combined with years of experience training lawyers around the world make BARBRI the best partner for success in the bar.

About Gigamon

Gigamon® is the company leading the convergence of network and security operations to help organizations reduce complexity and increase efficiency of their security stack. The Company's GigaSECURE® Security Delivery Platform is a next-generation network packet broker that helps customers make threats more visible across cloud, hybrid and on-premise environments, deploy resources faster and maximize the performance of their security tools. Global 2000 companies and government agencies rely on Gigamon solutions to stop tool sprawl and save costs. Learn how you can make your infrastructure more resilient, more agile and more secure at <https://www.gigamon.com>, on our blog and [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).

For more information on Gigamon and The Barbri Group, visit: www.gigamon.com and www.thebarbrigroup.com.

