PRODUCT REVIEW

Exinda Network Orchestrator

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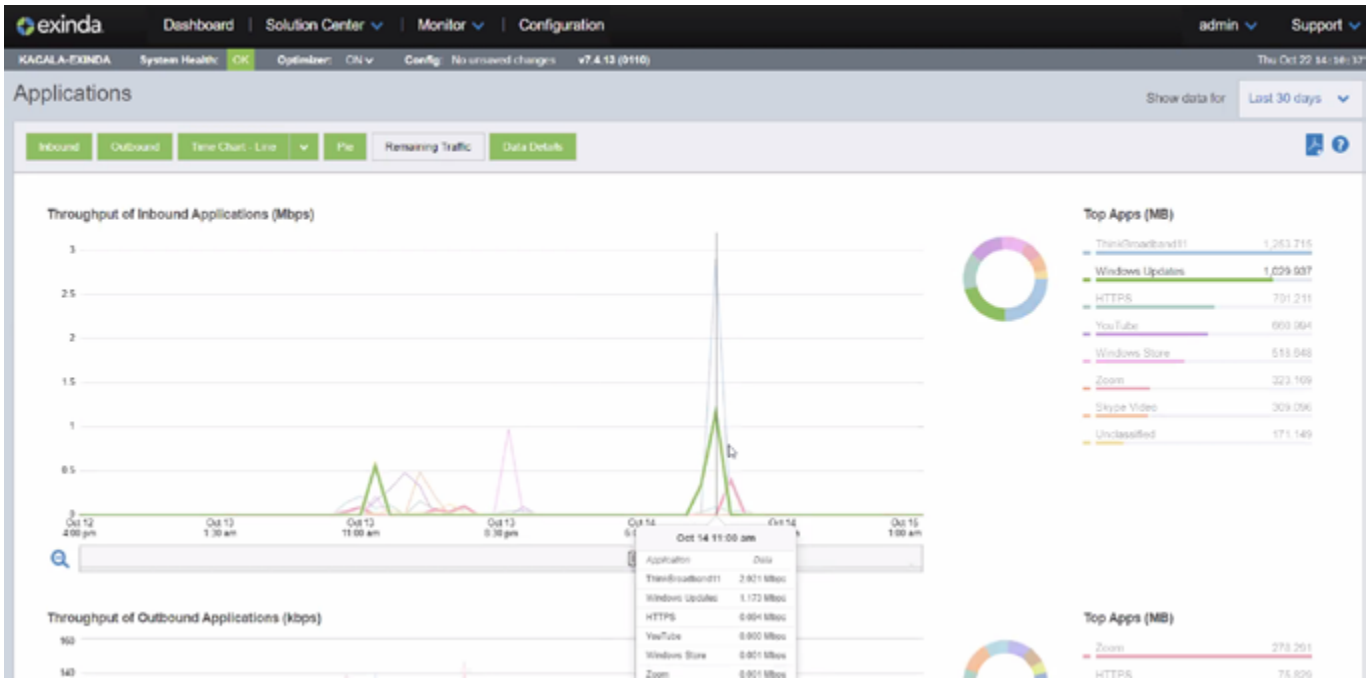
TechGenix

Introduction

Whether they are running on premises or in the cloud, todays' applications are consuming far more network bandwidth than ever before. As such, bandwidth is often in short supply, and applications are forced to compete with one another for bandwidth. GFI's Exinda Network Orchestrator is designed to help organizations to regain control of their network bandwidth once and for all, so that mission critical applications have the bandwidth that they need, when they need it. After hearing about this product from several different sources, I became curious and decided to check it out for myself.

01 Understanding Your Network Traffic

Before you can make the best possible use of your available Internet bandwidth (which is what Exinda Network Orchestrator is designed to do), you need to understand how your bandwidth is currently being used. Exinda provides a number of different charts and dashboard views that can help you to see how your Internet bandwidth is being consumed. You can see an example of this in the figure below.

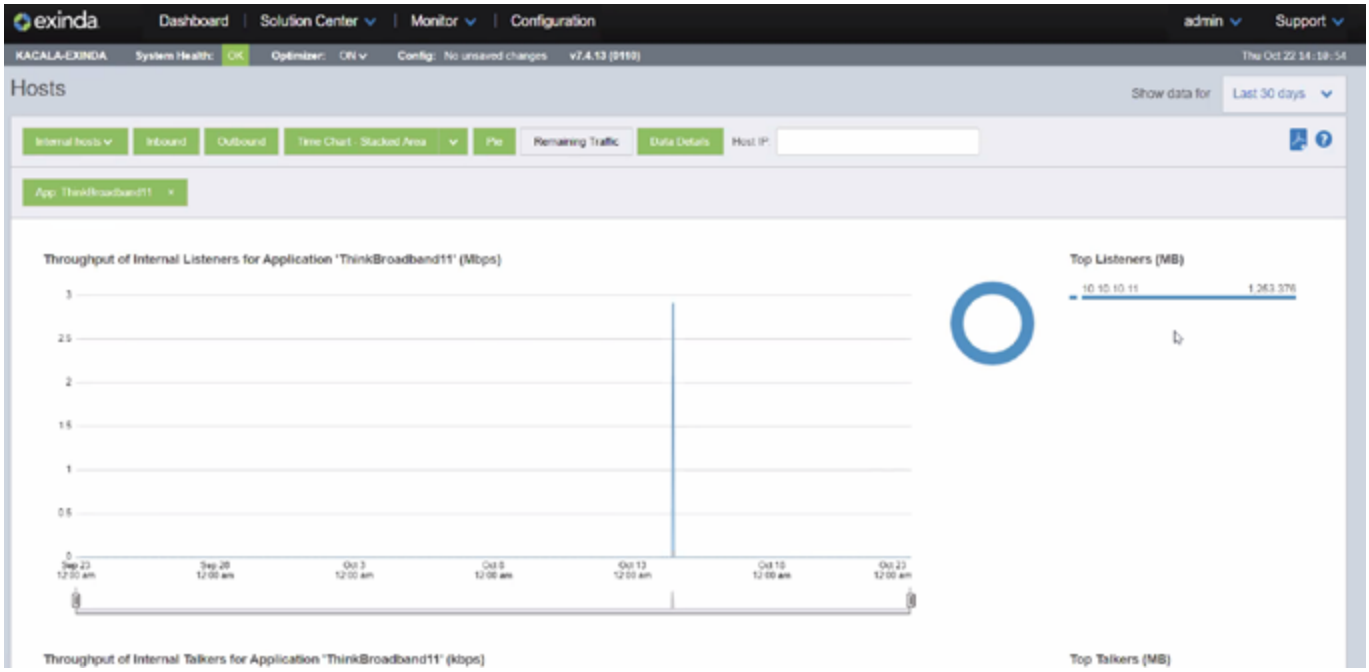


Exinda Network Orchestrator helps you to understand how your Internet bandwidth is currently being used.

The figure above shows a graphical representation of both inbound and outbound Internet bandwidth consumption. The interface also lists the applications that are responsible for that consumption. In this case, the apps consuming the most inbound bandwidth include ThinkBroadband11, Windows Update, HTTPS, and YouTube. Conversely, the apps consuming the most outbound bandwidth are Zoom and HTTPS.

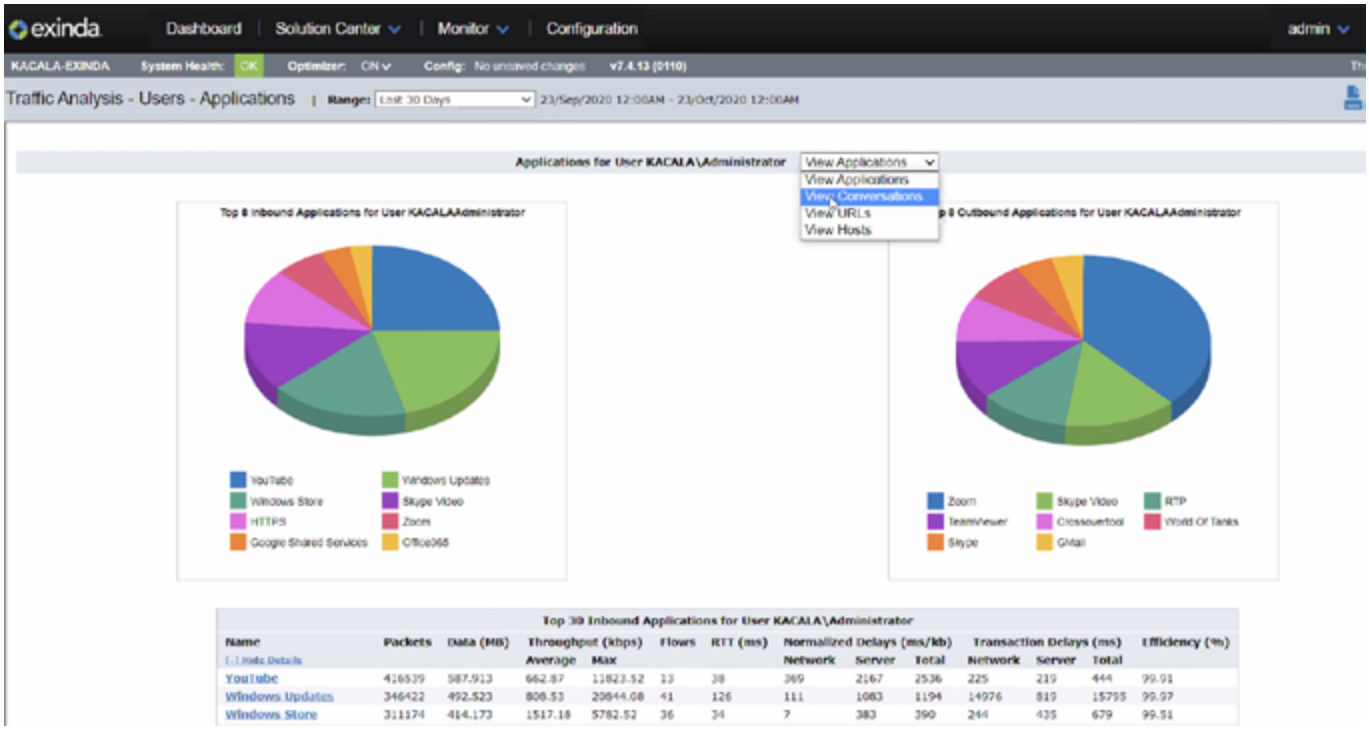
There are two reasons why this is important. First, an application that consumes a lot of inbound bandwidth does not necessarily generate a lot of outbound traffic (and visa versa). Second, organizations don't always have equal amounts of inbound and outbound bandwidth available to them. In my own organization for instance, I have far more inbound bandwidth available than outbound bandwidth. All of this is to say that simply looking at aggregate bandwidth consumption like some products do, can be very misleading.

Another thing that you might have noticed about the figure above, is that it provides a timeline that plots bandwidth consumption by application, date, and time. One of the things that I especially like about this interface is that you can hover over a demand spike an see detailed information about that moment in time. Of course the console also gives you the ability to examine the bandwidth consumption for a specific application as well. You can see an example of this below.



Exinda Network Orchestrator helps you to understand how your Internet bandwidth is currently being used.

One of the things that is true on almost every network is that some users will inevitably consume far more bandwidth than others. We've all probably got that one user who will watch a YouTube video while on a Zoom call. The user might even be downloading Windows updates in the background at the same time. Exinda Network Orchestrator can help with this sort of thing as well. Exinda's console makes it easy to tell who is consuming the most Internet bandwidth. You can also look at bandwidth consumption on a user by user basis to find out exactly what it is that the user was doing that resulted in such heavy bandwidth consumption. You can see an example of this in the figure below.

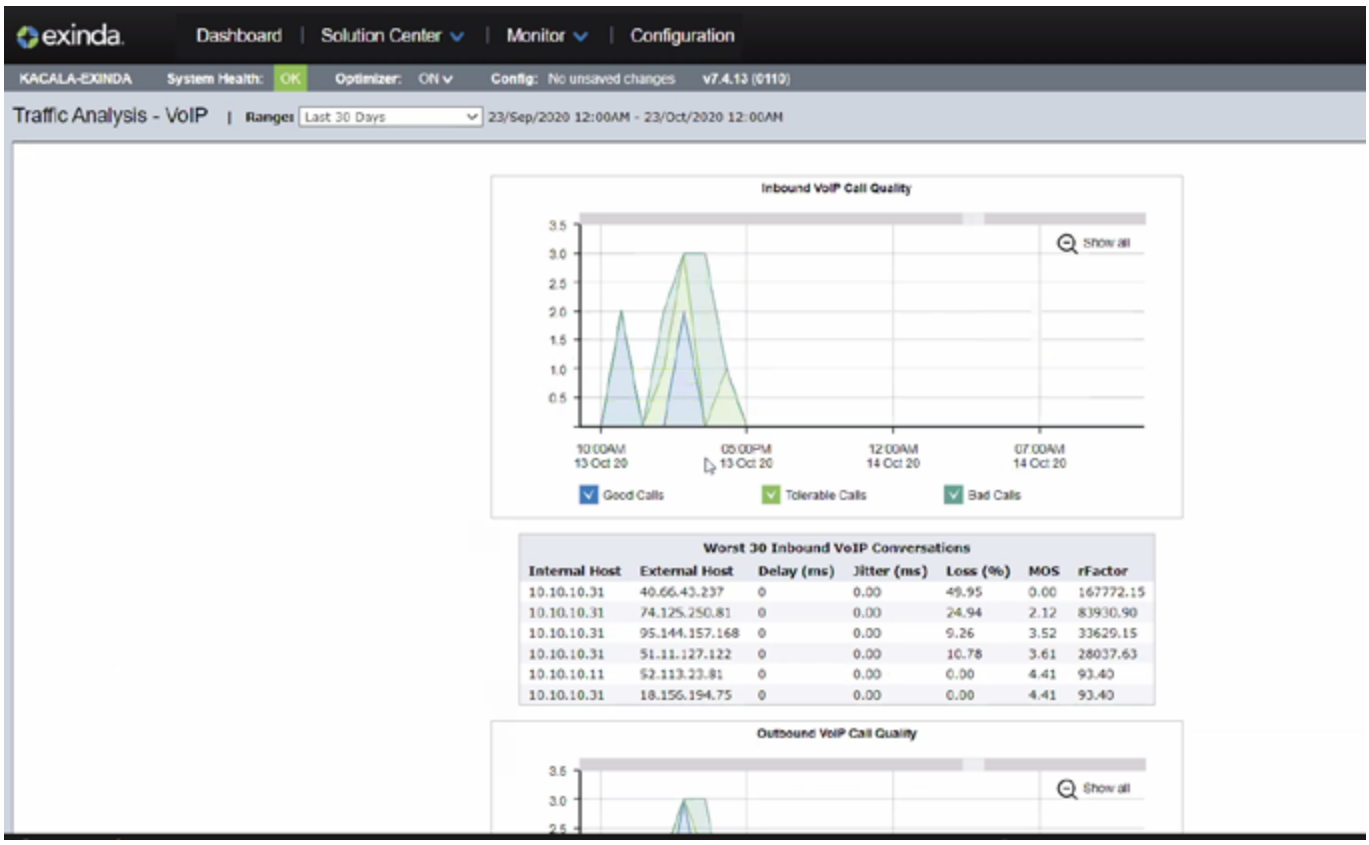


Exinda Network Orchestrator lets you examine bandwidth consumption on a user by user basis.

02 The End User Experience

One of the things that I think really sets Exinda Network Orchestrator apart from competing bandwidth management solutions is its application awareness. It doesn't just stop at monitoring how much bandwidth a particular application is consuming. It uses what it knows about the bandwidth consumption and about the bandwidth requirements for various applications to provide information about the overall end user experience.

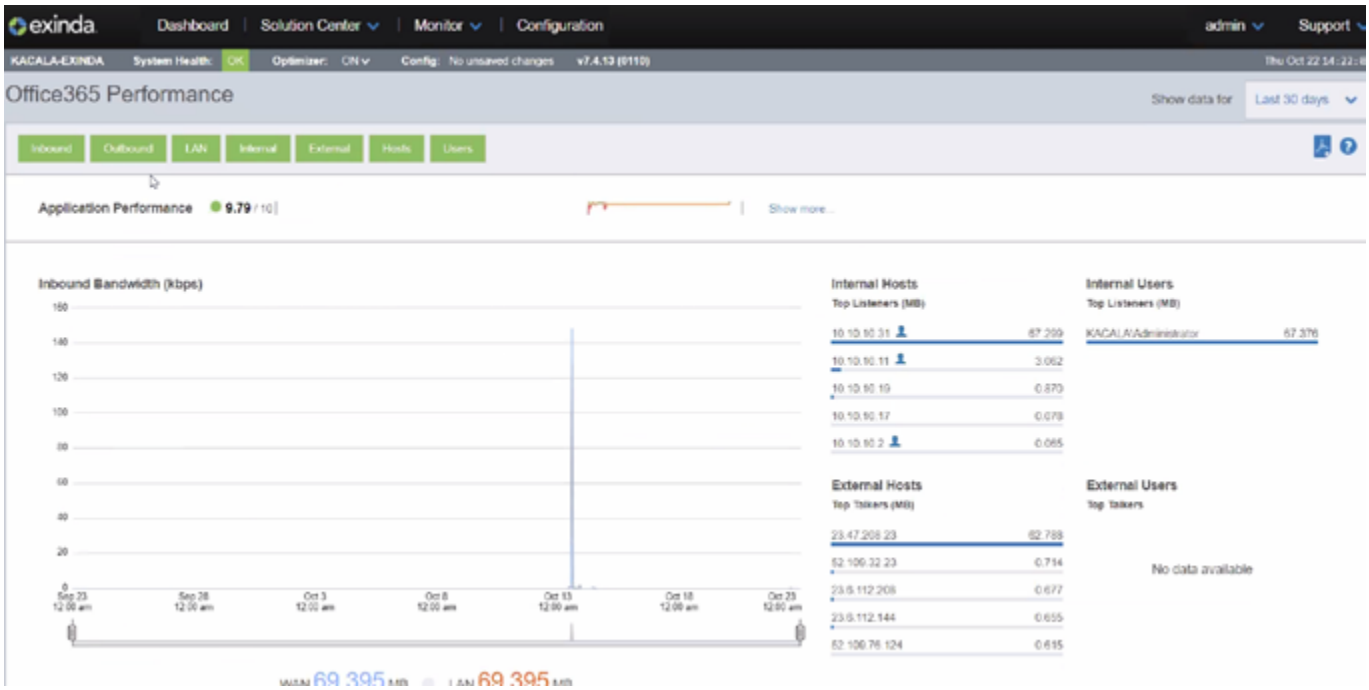
The figure below shows Exinda's ability to analyze VoIP calls. Here you can see a chart that quantifies calls based on time of day and call quality. You can easily get a feel for how many calls suffered from poor quality and the number of good quality calls. Notice in the figure that Exinda shows data for both inbound and outbound calls, and it provides specific details on the individual calls that were deemed to have the worst quality.



Exinda Network Orchestrator can quantify VoIP call quality.

It is worth noting that Exinda's application support is not limited solely to VoIP calls. It has native support for applications ranging from Office 365, Microsoft SQL Server, and SalesForce to Netflix, YouTube, and more.

The figure below shows what the Office 365 performance metrics look like. As you can see, Exinda identifies the top internal and external users, as well as the bandwidth that they are consuming.

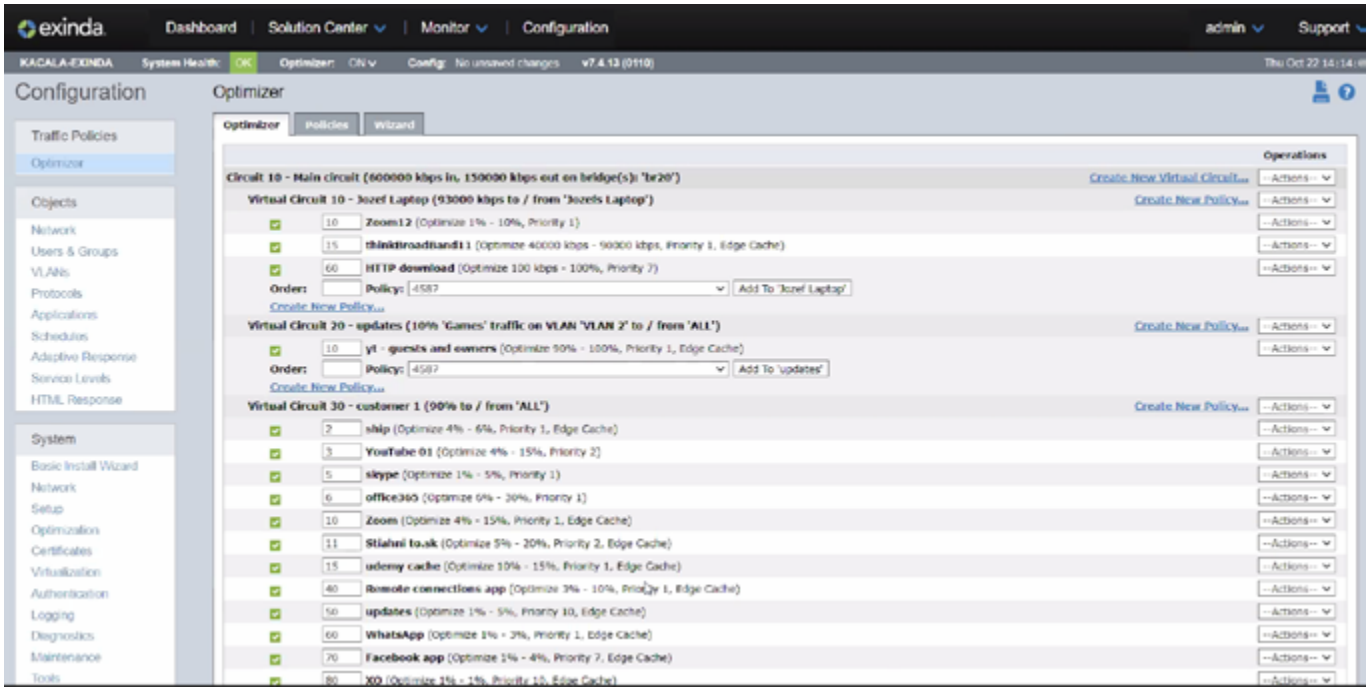


Exinda Network Orchestrator tracks Office 365 performance.

03 Using Exinda Network Orchestrator to Improve Your Bandwidth Use

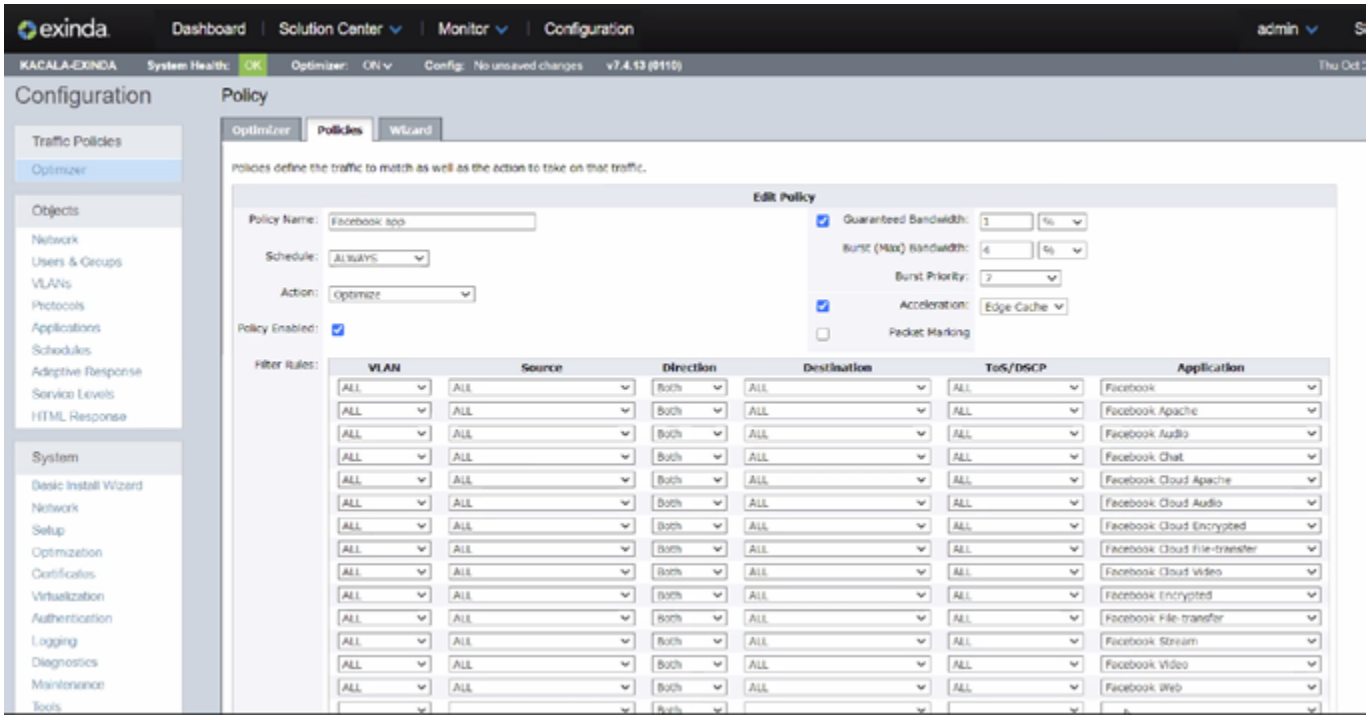
Exinda Network Orchestrator includes a plethora of features designed to help you to use your Internet bandwidth more efficiently. One of the things that the software is able to do for instance, is to identify rogue applications that are consuming bandwidth, so that you can put a stop to those applications.

Exinda Network Orchestrator also provides proactive recommendations that can help you to identify and correct potential issues before they become a problem. As you can see in the figure below, the software includes an optimizer that can help you to get the most out of your Internet bandwidth.



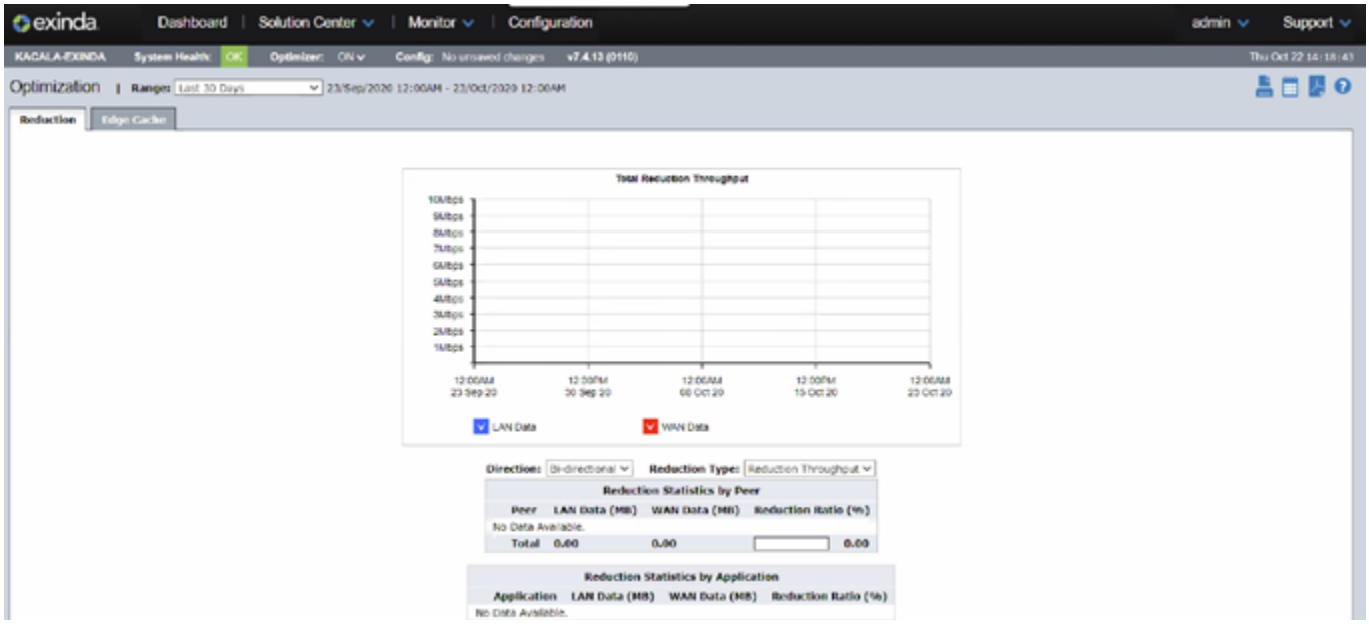
The optimizer can help you to make better use of your bandwidth.

As you would probably expect, Exinda Network Orchestrator also gives you the ability to set policies for how your bandwidth is to be used. If for example, an organization has a limited amount of inbound bandwidth, it can likely improve the end user experience by allocating less bandwidth to Microsoft updates and placing a higher priority on Zoom calls. You can see what the Policies screen looks like in the next figure.



This Policies screen allows you to set policies based on various rules.

Finally, Exinda gives you the ability to see how well your policies are working. Any time an organization invests in a new piece of software, it is important to be able to quantify ROI. In the case of Exinda Network Orchestrator, you can see exactly how much you have been able to reduce data throughput. Since there is a direct cost tied to bandwidth consumption, this screen is effectively allowing you to see how much you have lowered your costs. You can see what the reduction screen looks like below.

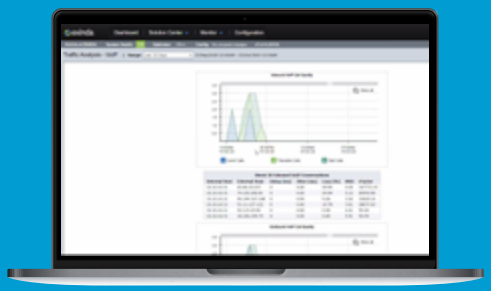


Exinda allows you to visualize your throughput reduction.

03 The Verdict

When I write a review for this site, it has become customary for me to conclude the review by assigning the product a numerical score, ranging from zero to five stars (with five stars being the highest possible score). After spending some time with Exinda Network Orchestrator, I have decided to give it a score of 4.9, which is a gold star review.

Overall, I was really impressed with Exinda Network Orchestrator. In fact, the only thing that kept me from giving the product a perfect score was the fact that the product is so feature rich that there is a bit of a learning curve associated with using it. I'm not suggesting that the interface is overly difficult to use, but rather that Exinda Network Orchestrator is a complex product and it can take a while to discover and learn how to use all of its various features.



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