Brazilian pay TV leader prepares for cloud, business integration with Cisco ACI

Globosat | Size: 3000 employees | Industry: Media and entertainment | Location: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

With roughly 50 million subscribers and more than 18 million daily viewers, Globosat is Brazil's market leader in subscription TV programming. Its portfolio includes 33 HD and pay-per-view channels, eight on-demand content services, and an exclusive TV Everywhere service. Globosat is a wholly owned subsidiary of Grupo Globo. For more information, visit: globosat.com.br.

Challenges

- Implement a simplified, extensible network infrastructure
- Relieve technology bottlenecks
- Improve tenant segmentation and application protection

Solutions

- Cisco® Application Centric Infrastructure (Cisco ACI™)
- Cisco® Nexus 9000 Series Switches

Results

- Established the network foundation for cloud and business integration
- Improved infrastructure consistency, integration, and security
- Increased the synergy between infrastructure and application teams

For more information

- Cisco ACI
- Cisco Nexus 9000

Challenge: Establish the technology foundation for future business unification

The only constant in the media industry is change. Traditional over-the-air broadcasts and SDI cable networks are being displaced by IP-based content delivery. The dividing lines between television, radio, and online content have blurred, with a diversity of media now accessible through a variety of distribution channels and devices. And the industry continues its march toward 4K, 5K, and even 8K programming.

For Grupo Globo—the largest mass media group in Latin America and parent company of Globosat—these changes have sweeping impacts. And the Grupo Globo executive team is finding new ways to integrate their subsidiaries and push them forward in lockstep.

"We are unifying the technology infrastructure across all of the companies to improve operational and cost efficiency," says Leandro Jardim, network coordinator at Globosat. "And that starts with the network."

The long-term vision, he explains, is having one network architecture for all of Grupo Globo's companies. A standardized framework and policy model for managing business operations, securing and sharing applications, and delivering content.

Globosat—along with its sister company, TV Globo—is helping lead the way. The two companies have deployed Cisco ACI, the industry's leading software-defined networking (SDN) solution, to integrate and simplify their data center operations. Raphael Ramos, network engineer at Globosat, believes it's a solution that can help unify and transform all of Grupo Globo's subsidiaries.

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Raphael Ramos
Network Engineer, Globosat

Relieving bottlenecks, improving security

The industry shift to 4K programming and IP-based delivery has pushed many data centers beyond their bandwidth and storage limitations. For Globosat, which is not only a media distributor but also the largest content and program creator in Latin America, the combination of Cisco ACI and Nexus 9000 switches has relieved some major bottlenecks.

"We're a broadcast company, so we can't have any disruption to our service," says Ramos, recalling the firewall and object storage chokepoints of the past. "The Nexus 9000 has a high speed, high density interface that's good for broadcasting. And it can scale horizontally, which is cost effective for us."

The integration and segmentation capabilities of Cisco ACI have made even more of an impact. Globosat has integrated its network with Palo Alto and VMware solutions, created a multitenant environment for its internal teams, and established granular rules for application and traffic management.

"With Cisco ACI integration and segmentation, we have eliminated our bottlenecks and improved our security," says Leandro Melo, network engineer at Globosat. "I can very quickly create endpoint groups, rules, and policies, and I can see all of the connections and dependencies. It's much easier for me."

Extending the network–and policy model–everywhere

The network includes two spines and 12 leaves, and it will soon be extended beyond Globosat's primary data center. The company is preparing to stretch the network fabric to a colocation facility using a Cisco ACI Remote Leaf switch. And it plans to extend the network to branch offices and cloud environments in the future.

"We want one network for all of our links, including branch offices, disaster recovery facility, and the public cloud," says Jardim. "Cisco ACI is perfect because it's simple, it's scalable, and we can control everything with policies."

In addition to technological and operational improvements, Ramos says Cisco ACI has increased the synergy between Globosat's infrastructure and application teams.

"In the past, we didn't really understand the applications, their connections, or their dependencies," he explains, noting the partnership that was required to create detailed policies for Globosat's business applications and transfer them to the Cisco ACI fabric. "Now we all have more visibility and we're more collaborative and efficient in our processes."

If things progress as expected, those levels of visibility, collaboration, and efficiency will soon be extended to all of Grupo Globo's subsidiaries.

"Compared to traditional networking, Cisco ACI has given us a different mindset and a new approach," Jardim adds. "We've learned the technology and changed our day-to-day operations, and we are now seeing the benefits of the implementation."

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