



# The Computerworld Honors Program

Honoring those who use Information Technology to benefit society

## Final Copy of Case Study

**Status:**

Laureate

**Year:**

2013

**Organization Name:**

Childfund International

**Organization URL:**

<http://www.childfund.org>

**Project Name:**

Office in a Box

**Please select the category in which you are submitting your entry:**

Human Services

**Please provide an overview of the nominated project. Describe the problem it was intended to solve, the technology or approach used, how it was innovative and any technical or other challenges that had to be overcome for successful implementation and adoption. (In 300 words or less.)**

ChildFund International's mission is to help deprived, excluded, and vulnerable children living in poverty have the capacity to become young adults, parents, and leaders who bring lasting and positive change to their communities. ChildFund began in 1938 as China's Children Fund (CCF), a non-governmental emergency relief organization created to help children displaced by the second Sino-Japanese War with a school and the KuKong orphanage. ChildFund operates in 31 countries around the world assisting approximately 17.8 million children and family members. Many of these countries operate with limited and inconsistent Internet speed, network policies, and bandwidth. Until recently, some locations even operated with satellite that made links unreliable at times. ChildFund

centralized its IT infrastructure to minimize the IT support and costs needed in the growing number of locations it operates globally. However, with a centralized IT infrastructure, slow access to critical applications including the Child Verification System (CVS), a custom application built that verifies the status of children the organization works with, often impacted the productivity of ChildFund's 1,500 employees. Understanding that adding bandwidth would increase costs and not fully address its performance problems, ChildFund looked for solutions that would enable them to keep the increased IT efficiency gained by the centralized infrastructure, improve performance and provide a quick return on investment. Consequently, ChildFund evaluated and decided WAN optimization would best meet its needs. WAN optimization will clearly and most importantly improve the communications between a sponsor and a child. Additionally, WAN optimization provided flexibility and scalability for future applications and services. ChildFund also recognized that donations are increasingly online and deployed an application delivery controller (ADC) to handle traffic spikes and strengthen its security for PCI compliance. All of this will eventually have a positive impact on the growth of sponsors.

**When was this project implemented or last updated? (Please specify month and year.) Has it incorporated new technologies and/or other innovations since its initial deployment? (In 300 words or less.)**

Riverbed wide area network (WAN) optimization appliances were first purchased in May 2012 for two locations and most recently deployed at two additional locations in November 2012. ChildFund is now able to easily set up operations at new locations, and knows employees will be given fast access to the applications and data they need. More importantly, ChildFund now has the opportunity to add services like wireless networking, provide access to external partners for collaboration, and add new applications without fear they will be slow or inaccessible. ChildFund also deployed the Riverbed Stingray, a software ADC and application firewall that enabled the organization to build a new public website to give sponsors faster, secure access to the website, and that can route donations to local teams more quickly to fund programs for children in the region.

**Is implementation of the project complete? If no, please describe the project's phases and which phase the project is now in. (In 300 words or less.)**

To support its global workforce ChildFund plans to expand the WAN optimization deployment to all of its 31 locations by March 2014. In addition, the company found that SaaS applications respond slowly due to latency and distance between the SaaS provider's data center and the end user. Once ChildFund deploys Salesforce.com that will be used for a Donor Management System. ChildFund will benefit from the Riverbed Steelhead Cloud Accelerator, a

software-as-a-service (SaaS) accelerator. ChildFund chose Riverbed Steelhead appliances in part because of the number of optimizations it offers and is also considering using Microsoft SharePoint in the future, which will enable better collaboration between its offices.

**Please provide at least one example of how the technology project has benefited a specific individual or organization. Feel free to include personal quotes from individuals who have directly benefited from the work. (In 300 words or less.)**

Employees and volunteers would have to wait up to 20 minutes to access the CVS application prior to the WAN optimization deployment. After the deployment, the CVS application loads in just seven seconds, a 171x improvement. In addition, ChildFund realized a 9x data reduction. Now employees and volunteers have near instant access to the critical applications they need to provide assistance and care to children in need, regardless of where they are located in the world. Another important benefit of this technology is speed of communication between the sponsor and the child. Children and their sponsors frequently write letters to each other. After the Riverbed deployment, correspondence processed through the Letter Translation Exchange, a custom translation application, the translation and electronic delivery of the more than 50,000 letters annually will occur much faster for one national office alone and 1.5 million letters annually for all offices around the globe.

**Would this project be considered an innovation, a best practice or other notable advancement that could be adopted by or tailored for other organizations and uses? If yes, please describe that here. (In 300 words or less.)**

Many organizations are looking to gain efficiency and increase productivity. However, non-profits such as ChildFund are under increased pressure to do so with very limited IT budgets. ChildFund's initiative to transform its IT infrastructure by centralizing its data center is a relevant example of how to drive collaboration, increase productivity, save on costs, and improve operations. The Riverbed deployment also offers best practices that IT practitioners can learn from. First, know your requirements. Understand the problem you are trying to solve. Performance and security were the immediate problems for ChildFund, but it also recognized that it needed a solution to scale as the organization continues to grow. It also needed to offer flexibility for new IT initiatives such as building or deploying new applications across its entire organization. Riverbed offered the breadth and depth of optimizations that assured ChildFund that no matter what application deployed, Riverbed could support it. Secondly, work with trusted technology partners. VistaOne, an IT solution partner, suggested Riverbed performance solutions, but it was the support that Riverbed offered that won over



ChildFund. This support plus the configuration efforts by VistaOne through Riverbed's CMC product made deployments an easy, simple process. ChildFund leverages Riverbed as a trusted advisor as its requirements change. Lastly, even with limited IT budgets, IT investments don't have to be a budget breaker. Keep return on investment in mind. Calculate the added value an IT investment brings to your organization. In addition to a short payback period, the investment in this case translated to a better experience for sponsors, more productive employees, and most importantly, more children are getting the education, healthcare, and nutritious food they need to thrive.

**If there are any other details that the judges should know about this project, please note them here. (In 300 words or less.)**

Here is a link to a video about ChildFund:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S2DaPLLGPZM&list=UU5OCzg6yUZt3BQEKjaptdyQ&index=34>