

Rivermine Software Readies Telecommunications Resource Management For Mainstream Convergence

Highlights

Product Name: Rivermine Software Suite

Product Function: Telecommunications resource management

Operating Systems: Unix/Linux, Oracle 9i Enterprise database

Vendor Name: Rivermine Software

URL for Product Information:

<http://www.rivermine.com/products.html>

Vendor Contact Information:

Rivermine Software
3975 Fair Ridge Drive
Suite 350 South
Fairfax, VA. 22033
Ph: 703-359-6199
Email: info@rivermine.com

Pricing Information: \$250,000 to \$1.8 million

Availability: Current

Abstract

Managing telecommunications resources has traditionally been a hit-or-miss, operationally inefficient process, often with minimal capabilities to evaluate expensive telecommunications bills. As a result, enterprises often default to outsourced services that are, in many cases, only partially more reliable than their own inefficient methods and an added cost burden in and of themselves.

However, as packet-based networks and IP services convergence is becoming more and more dominant, and business pressures on enterprise IT services to outperform are rising—traditional habits of mind in managing telecommunications resources no longer suffice. Ordering and accounting for

telecommunications services must be done with a clear understanding of network inventory and business process. This demands a software-centric rather than a service-centric approach—in other words, an approach enabled through software architected to automate resource management processes, rather than an approach that's primarily administrative and labor intensive. This approach is also one that can ultimately integrate with broad systems in place for IT asset management and control across both data and voice infrastructures.

Rivermine Software has introduced a compelling solution that recognizes the need to focus on software, architecture, process and inventory awareness. It reflects a meaningful step forward towards integrating telecommunications resource management into a more mainstream vision of asset inventory and control—a vision that must become reality in the near term if enterprises are to get beyond a stone-age mindset in managing and integrating telecommunications resources.

Accounting for the Telecommunications Jigsaw Puzzle

While it is popular to view network management as a more mature and hence less dynamic arena than, say, application management—the reality is that the two IT disciplines are becoming joined at the hip. Enterprise network resources must increasingly span global business infrastructures with a complex mix of sometimes as many as hundreds of service providers, while application services are becoming more distributed and “network-centric.” VoIP and the notion of a commonly managed portfolio of IP services will certainly accelerate this process. With the advent of Web Services, this common ground between network and application issues will become even more expansive and multi-dimensional.

When you combine network globality with the need for much enhanced sophistication and control of IT services, the strain on telecommunications resource

management to deliver both superior accountability and performance multiplies. In order to deliver network services to applications, employees, customers and suppliers in all locations, multinational IT shops must cobble together services from scores of different providers all over the globe. Even geographically dispersed IT organizations with much more constrained geographical reach must find a way to stitch together a variety of competing services in a way that makes measurable and justifiable business sense.

Telecommunications and IT Asset Management

In parallel with this trend, asset management across the traditional data infrastructure is beginning to show strong signs of structural innovation. A focus on inventory and auto-discovery, data collection and, increasingly, analytics in support of asset and inventory from desktops to telecommunications circuits is not yet here, but it will and must become a common reality within the next five years for those IT organizations seeking to show value and accountability.

Just a quick look at some basic business drivers should help to clarify why this will be necessary.

Consider, for instance:

- New application services including VoIP, which demand close accountability between IT and telecom
- Mergers and Acquisitions—which impact all areas of the IT/ telecommunications infrastructure
- Data Center consolidation that can't be meaningfully done without assessing data center-to-WAN interdependencies
- Compliance initiatives to show accountability for how data is accessed and delivered, and how cost-effectively and responsibly resource investments have been managed

Add to this more natively WAN initiatives—such as network migration from ATM to IP-VPN services, or bandwidth adjustments based on company growth or new services—and it becomes clear that traditional, service-centric approaches to

handling telecommunications resources can only very imperfectly address these scenarios. Integrated software architectures with data sharing across both IT and telecommunications assets must become an absolute reality within the next decade if IT is to keep pace with these and other demands.

New Solution

Rivermine Software has introduced a solution that provides a pragmatic and wide-ranging set of capabilities for managing telecommunications resources. It delivers value to enterprise telecommunications organizations today in the ordering, planning and optimization of telecommunications resources—with ROI payback within six months for large telecommunications investments (for those firms spending more than \$35 million per year). At the same time, it has established partnerships with IT data center providers such as HP and BMC/Remedy—and has architected a solution that provides a disciplined approach to data collection and storage that should stand it in good stead to address the next-generation of integrated IT and telecommunications resources.

Rivermine's solution runs on an Oracle database, and is designed to easily support the integration of ERP information so that its telecommunications resource management can capture business process policies and mirror organizational communications flows within the broader business. The GUI and reports are Web-based, and are designed for the fluid but controlled sharing of information across an IT organization, and between the enterprise and its carrier providers, securely, across firewalls using Web Services APIs.

A short summary of Rivermine's capabilities is as follows:

- **Ordering and Provisioning:** Rivermine's "Service Order Manager" offers software templates and reports that enable realistic assessments of what telecommunications resources are required, while supporting more effective collaboration between the enterprise and its supplier. This includes templates that lead the telecommunications admin through data fields that help to ensure that the

right information is provided to the carrier. In combination with the broader Rivermine portfolio, the Service Order Manager manages the approval process, helps to coordinate engineering-related communication, and supports status tracking.

- Inventory Management:** Inventory is at the heart of Rivermine’s solution, and it is this “inventory focus” more than anything else that positions Rivermine well to evolve to support integrated IT resource management. Currently, its inventory management can provide circuit analysis, design analysis, network mapping, LEC analysis and IXC analysis. The network mapping, a relational topology of the telecommunications infrastructure across brands, is automatically updated with changes inputted into the system—which can come through third party software solutions, invoices, and Excel inputs. This combination of automatic updates with versatile data input directly reflects Rivermine’s broader, architectural approach, versus an “invoice-centric,” or service approach.

Rivermine inventory management encompasses telecommunications equipment, circuits, services, invoices, locations, contracts and users. The value of this comprehensive and well-architected system in telecommunications resource optimization and network engineering is self-evident. Its value in service provisioning should also be clear—as excess or deficient capacity becomes immediately and graphically visible.

- Invoice processing and auditing:** The Finance Module leverages Rivermine’s strengths in inventory, ordering, and milestones. It automates invoice processing (both electronic and paper), and provides an ongoing history of contracts and financial compliance. This capability also supports contract compliance, as the software validates that contract rules and rates are in compliance. Customers point to hard benefits here, with quick cash recovery when contracts are in violation. This audit process has in some cases shortened the time for carrier penalty payments from three or four

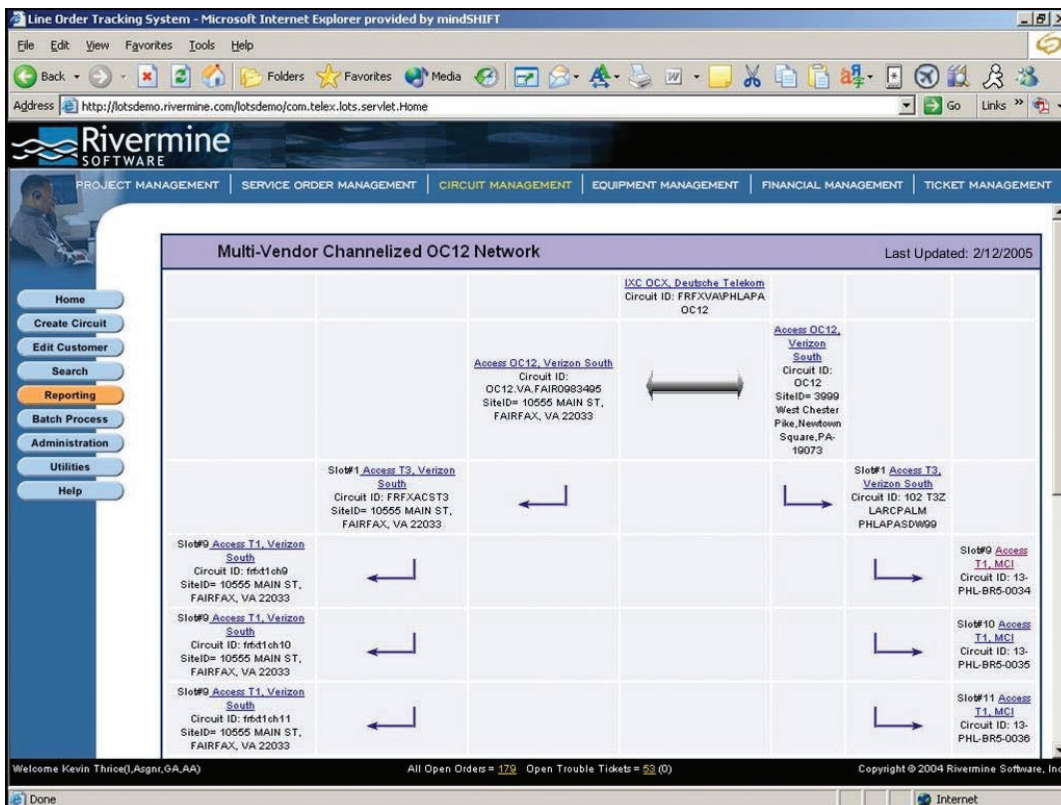


Figure 1 – Network Topology Showing a Channelized OC12 Network

months to one month, once the switch was made to Rivermine from an outsourced auditing firm.

- **Milestones:** Rivermine has determined that there are normative and anticipated milestones associated with different types of telecommunications projects. Its “Milestone Template Editor” makes it fairly easy to map out project commitments and requirements as they play out over time. This both enhances the collaboration between the enterprise and the service provider, and supports a workflow-based, tracking system with automated alarms and trouble tickets when project checkpoints are not met. Rivermine’s “milestones” also supports historical tracking and “Service Provider Scorecards” to show how different service providers map to committed deadlines, how the enterprise is performing, and the estimated financial impact of non-compliant behavior.
- **Telecommunications:** Rivermine offers the capability for automating actions between the enterprise and its carriers. For instance, an order could be relaunched automatically based on an e-mail generated when a milestone is not met. This capability comes with a wizard for defining business rules and policies between the carrier and the enterprise.

Pricing and Availability

From \$250,000 to \$1.8 million depending on software modules purchased and company size. Currently available.

EMA’s Perspective

EMA believes that Rivermine Software has taken some significant and meaningful steps in providing enterprise telecommunications organizations with a means of taking control of a complex array of resources, and in setting the stage for a more robust integration of infrastructure resource management across both telecommunications and data-centric IT.

The strengths of Rivermine’s solution in terms of inventory, integration and software automation (existing and potential), set it apart from its competitors. Moreover, the functional and pragmatic

attributes that it offers make it a compelling investment for large enterprises with complex and critical network needs.

The one obvious limitation to Rivermine’s solutions is its strong focus on larger organizations with millions in telecommunications dollars to spend. Rivermine is quite up front about this—and as a relevant immediate market, it makes perfect sense. However, longer term, over the next five years or so, it would be to Rivermine’s advantage to look at down-market scalability, which will also serve to put a premium on finding new ways for automation and advancing design.

Beyond this, Rivermine’s challenge going forward will be two-fold: to help to nurture traditionally oriented telecommunications organizations towards a more software-versus-services mindset; while setting the stage through partnerships and product design to integrate more completely into a broad, IT infrastructure resource management strategy in the near-to-intermediate future. EMA believes that Rivermine should do well in addressing both challenges, and that if it does succeed—it will set an example that will stimulate much needed innovations across both enterprise IT organizations and their management solutions providers.

This report in whole or in part may not be duplicated, reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or retransmitted without prior written permission of Enterprise Management Associates, Inc.



**ENTERPRISE MANAGEMENT
ASSOCIATES**

Phone: 303.543.9500

<http://www.emausa.com>

891.020905