

Fidal Boosts WAN Performance, Cuts Costs in Half by Switching from MPLS to Cato

About Fidal

Headquartered in Paris France, Fidal is a French law firm with 90 locations in France and one each in Belgium and Morocco. Applications run in both the corporate datacenter and the Microsoft Azure cloud. Before Cato, Fidal connected its locations via MPLS and relied on traditional firewalls for security.

Fidal Needed an MPLS Replacement

Global organizations that rely on MPLS for WAN connectivity find it expensive, rigid, and poorly suited to today's cloud-enabled, collaborate-anywhere business environment. Fidal, a century-old French law firm with 1,300 lawyers at 90 locations in France and one each in Belgium and Morocco, was no exception. Fidal runs applications both in its own datacenter and in Microsoft Azure. Fidal's MPLS network was aging and expensive.

“Today's collaborative work technologies require much better performance than we were getting with MPLS,” says James Bonnaventure, Fidal CTO. “We were reaching link saturation, our users were dissatisfied, and security was a big challenge. We really needed to reevaluate our network and find a way to meet these challenges.”

Bonnaventure set out to find a WAN solution that would meet the firm's requirements for performance, security, flexibility, and cloud connectivity. “We wanted a solution that was easily managed centrally, with one or two partners at most,” says Bonnaventure.

Initially Bonnaventure considered a mainstream SD-WAN solution but switched his focus to SASE to benefit from centralized management and security.

“Ultimately we chose to work with Cato because its solution gave us much better centralized management and a security overlay,” says Bonnaventure.

Fidal Deploys 90 Sites in a Year with Cato

Selceon already had a lot of experience with Cato. “We were the first provider in France to deploy Cato Networks for one of our customers, says Eric Tavidian, Selceon co-founder.

“As soon as we saw Cato’s value in terms of network performance, optimization, cost, and speed of deployment, we chose to make it one of the strategic offerings in our portfolio. All the other solutions require managing a lot of boxes on sites, rather than Cato’s intelligent, centralized management via the cloud.”

Cato SASE Cloud optimally connects all enterprise network resources, including branch locations, the hybrid workforce, and physical and cloud datacenters, into a secure global, cloud-native service. Connecting a location to Cato is just a matter of installing a simple Cato Socket appliance that links automatically to one of Cato’s 70+ Points of Presence (PoPs) and its fast global private backbone. Cato Edge SD-WAN extends the Cato SASE Cloud to provide prioritized and resilient connectivity over multiple last mile links in physical locations, while Cato SDP Client and Clientless access enable secure and optimized application access for users everywhere, including at home and on the road.

Cato’s cloud-native security edge, Cato SSE 360, converges a Secure Web Gateway (SWG), Cloud Access Security Broker (CASB), Data Loss Prevention (DLP), Zero Trust Network Access (ZTNA), and Firewall as a Service (FWaaS) with Advanced Threat Protection. It fully enforces granular corporate access policies on all applications on premises and in the cloud, protecting users against threats and preventing sensitive data loss.

Deployment of Cato was fast and smooth. “We deployed Cato to 90 sites in less than a year, thanks to Selceon and Cato,” says Bonnaventure. “That’s quite an achievement considering we were on Covid-19 lockdown at the time. We basically redid our entire wide area network in a year.”

Bonnaventure was impressed with Cato support. “Cato’s team was there for us throughout the entire migration and even developed a feature in Azure for our company that didn’t yet exist. Cato ported the entire network, even our phone network, which now runs through Cato. The next step will be replacing our remote access VPN with Cato.”

Cato Pulls it All Together

Bonnaventure is very pleased with the results. “Cato allows Fidal to have a homogenous network and security architecture across all its sites and even across our mobile users, who will benefit from all of Cato’s security layers when they get on the Cato VPN. It simplified our network by replacing MPLS with fiber, which cuts our communications costs in half, and will ultimately bring the entire network and network security under a single centralized management solution.”

Bonnaventure is thrilled with Cato’s management console.

Bonnaventure also loves how quickly he can deploy new sites with Cato.

“We can deploy a new site in a few weeks without having to reconfigure everything because the architecture is completely centralized. We just bring the links, deploy the boxes on site, and the new sites benefit immediately from the entire Cato network and security infrastructure”.

Overall, deploying Cato has benefited Fidal. “Cato’s solutions have enabled us to strengthen our security systems and give our mobile users the same level of security as the data center or Azure.” He considers Cato ahead of its time. “When we chose it over a year ago nobody was talking about SASE. Now, everybody is moving towards SASE and you can see it discussed in all the IT media.”

James Bonnaventure,
CTO, Fidal