



VERTICAL: Healthcare
HEAD OFFICE: Japan
GLOBAL FOOTPRINT: North & South America, Europe,
LOCATIONS: Middle East, Africa, Asia-Pacific, Japan

Topcon Achieves a Fast, Secure Global WAN with Cato

About Topcon

Based in Tokyo, Topcon Corporation is a global leader in manufacturing of technology designed to address essential challenges society faces in healthcare, agriculture and infrastructure. Topcon specializes in developing optical, sensing and control solutions powered by leading digital transformation technologies for these industries.

The Challenge: A Single, Fast Global WAN Proved Challenging with MPLS

Global enterprises often struggle to provide consistent WAN performance and security across all their locations. MPLS is very expensive or unavailable in some remote regions and VPN alternatives can be slow and unreliable. Topcon Corp knew this problem only too well.

Topcon is based in Tokyo, Japan with offices spread across the Americas, Middle East, Africa, Asia Pacific, and China. With expertise in advanced technology and global business development, the company provides global solutions to meet societal challenges in healthcare, agriculture, and infrastructure. Some of these include technologies that automate the operation of agricultural equipment and harness digital sensors to manage the growth of agricultural crops.

Topcon was struggling to provide fast, secure connectivity to its offices in China. Most of its other locations took advantage of fast MPLS connections, but China's offices had slower connections that were often problematic. "We started seeing the limitations of MPLS for worldwide deployment and started looking for a next generation network we could deploy everywhere," says Nakajima. "We needed a simple, fast, secure solution for regions in Asia where MPLS hadn't yet been established."



Topcon Searches for a Global WAN Solution, Chooses Cato

GlobalDots, a global cloud solutions provider, introduced Nakajima to the Cato solution and he was immediately impressed. “I had already been working with a local SD-WAN deployment in my previous job, so I was familiar with the technology. I liked that the Cato SASE could give us the fast connectivity in China and other parts of Asia that we needed while also keeping our communications secure and allowing us to monitor everything properly.”

Cato connects all global enterprise network resources — including branch locations, mobile users, and physical and cloud datacenters — into a single secure, global, cloud-native network service. With all WAN and Internet traffic consolidated in the cloud, Cato applies a suite of robust security services to protect all traffic, including anti-malware, next-generation firewall, content filtering, and IPS.

Connecting a location to Cato is just a matter of installing a simple Cato Socket appliance, which links automatically to the nearest of Cato’s more than 75 globally dispersed Points of Presence (PoPs). At the local PoP, Cato provides an onramp to its global backbone and security services. The backbone is not only privately managed for zero packet loss and five nine’s uptime; it also has built-in WAN optimization to dramatically improve throughput. Cato monitors network traffic and selects the optimum path for each packet across the Cato backbone. Mobile users run across the same backbone, benefiting from the same optimization features, improving remote access performance.

Nakajima was sold on Cato, but convincing internal management was another story. “We had a lot of conversations in which I had to explain Cato and SD-WAN to management and field staff and assure them that I couldn’t find anything else with all the built-in security and monitoring that Cato had,” says Nakajima. “I made those features the big selling points and got it through the internal approval process.”

Fast, Secure WAN and Remote Access Worldwide

Implementing the Cato solution was quick and smooth, thanks to Cato’s simple socket appliances and help from GlobalDots. “They did most of the work,” says Nakajima. “As long as there was an Internet connection in our Asian offices, GlobalDots could handle just about everything else remotely. We also replaced our remote access service with Cato’s for about 600 employees, starting with smart phones. It took a little education to get them started but it was pretty smooth.” Staff PC’s will come next. Performance in China and other regions without MPLS has been fast, but its Cato’s simplicity that has really impressed Nakajima.

“Cato’s biggest benefit from my point of view is that the network operators no longer need any specialized knowledge,” says Nakajima. “We have a small network staff, and they have to look after the internal network, the Asian network, and our domestic WAN. Now they don’t have to deal with all those version upgrades, security patches, outages, and support issues. Aside from the time and resources saved, there are no more of the human configuration errors we used to have.”

Nakajima is also impressed with how easy and quick bandwidth upgrades are with Cato.

“We’ve been moving to cloud services such as AWS and Azure, and in the initial design phase we can invest in the minimum bandwidth we need. Then we can quickly ramp up the bandwidth with Cato when we need it.”

Topcon had a WAN connection in the U.S. that was impacted by wildfires, requiring a quick replacement, which came easily with Cato SASE. “Normally we would have had to run another MPLS line, which would have taken a long time, but with Cato we were able to recover immediately with nothing more than a contract change,” says Nakajima. “It’s so great for our business when we can do these kinds of things so fast.”

Nakajima also saw the true value of Cato’s remote access service when Covid hit. “Basically, nothing happened,” said Nakajima. “Cato’s remote access was already deployed for our workers so there wasn’t much to do. And since nothing happened, management was amazed when they started reading about all the problems other companies were having giving their employees the capability to work from home.”

Overall, the Cato SASE solution has been a big success for Topcon. “We were able to provide a fast connection and secure environment for our employees, even when Covid hit and they had to work from home,” says Nakajima. “The Wi-Fi networks users had at home were not very secure after all, but it didn’t matter with Cato’s security services. Management has been happy with how quickly we can set up Cato at new locations and how well work-from-home went during Covid.”

As for the future, Nakajima plans to use Cato to create a business continuity/disaster recovery plan that will fail over from AWS to Azure or vice versa. “I’m trying to create a structure where if one cloud service goes down the network won’t be cut off,” says Nakajima.

Takashi Nakajima,

Head of the Digital Transformation (DX) Promotion Division and Chief of Business Operations

