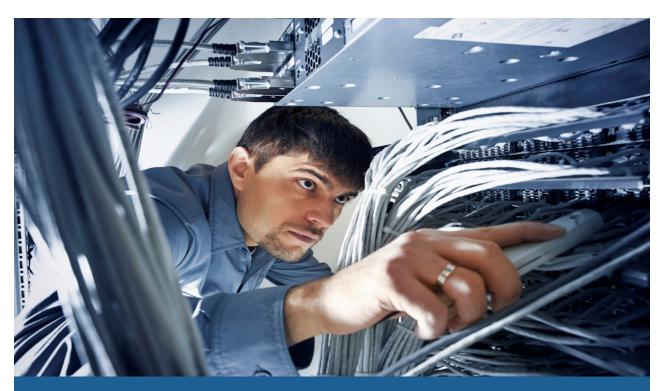


# WINDSTREAM HOLDINGS, INC. BANKRUPTCY CASE STUDY

FILED ON 02/25/2019



CreditRiskMonitor's warning of Windstream Holdings, Inc.'s ("Windstream") bankruptcy risk was determined by a combination of factors:

Monthly Average FRISK® Score	Page 2
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## MONTHLY AVERAGE FRISK® SCORE

CreditRiskMonitor's FRISK® score had been warning of financial stress at Windstream Holdings, Inc. (NASDAQ: WIN) for more than a year.

We issued a special High Risk Report, dated December 27, 2017, as conditions continued to deteriorate and become more troubling.

The company ultimately filed for bankruptcy on February 25, 2019.

Business Name	2018	2018	2018	2018	2018	2018	2018	2018	2018	2018	2018	2019	2019
business italile	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	ОСТ	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB
Windstream Holdings, Inc.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1

BANKRUPT

The FRISK® score is 96% accurate\* in predicting the risk of corporate failure/bankruptcy over a 12-month horizon.

All FRISK® scores are recalculated every night for each subsequent 12-month period.

	EDICK® P	robability of bankru	ptcy within 12 months
	IKISK	From	То
Best	10	0.00%	0.12%
	9	0.12%	0.27%
	8	0.27%	0.34%
	7	0.34%	0.55%
	6	0.55%	0.87%
	5	0.87%	1.40%
	4	1.40%	2.10%
	3	2.10%	4.00%
	2	4.00%	9.99%
Worst	1	9.99%	50.00%

While the percentage risk of bankruptcy varies at each FRISK® score, 96% of public companies that eventually go bankrupt enter the FRISK® "red zone" prior to filing. A FRISK® score of 5 or less is an important warning sign.

<sup>\*</sup> FRISK® score accuracy of 96% is based on backtesting of U.S. public companies; results may vary by country.

## THE FRISK® SCORE COMPONENTS

At the core of the CreditRiskMonitor process is our 96% accurate FRISK® score, which indicates a company's level of financial stress on a scale of 1 to 10, based on the probability of bankruptcy over a 12-month horizon. When available, the FRISK® score incorporates a number of powerful risk indicators including:

A "Merton" type model using stock market capitalization and volatility

Financial ratios, including those used in the Altman Z"-Score Model Bond agency ratings from Moody's, Fitch, DBRS, & Morningstar

## Crowdsourced CreditRiskMonitor Usage Data

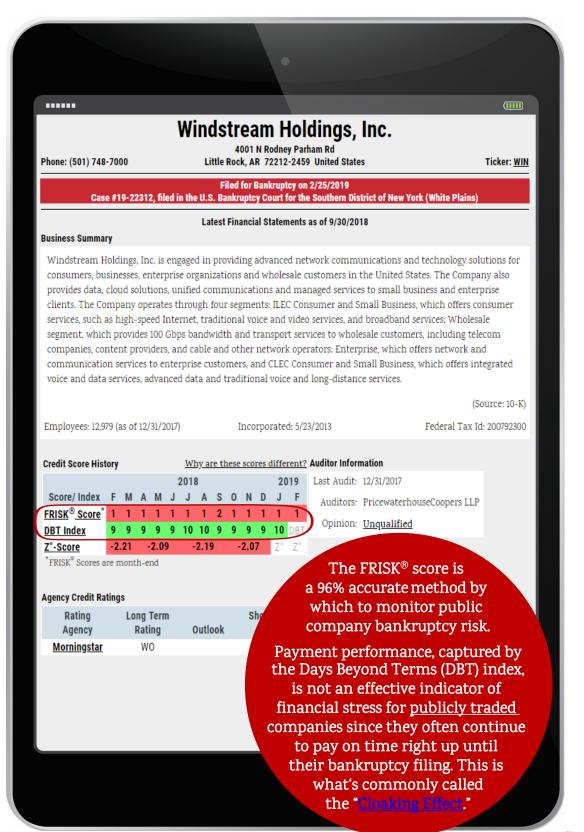
<u>Crowdsourcing</u> has enhanced the accuracy and timeliness of the FRISK® score. We collect and analyze data patterns from thousands of CreditRiskMonitor subscribers, including professionals from more than 35% of the Fortune 1000 and other large corporations worldwide.

The crowdsourcing advantage is even more powerful in our FRISK® score since many of the professionals who use our service are credit managers:

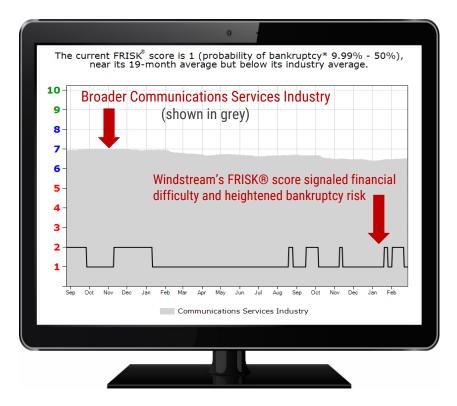
- Credit managers control one of the largest sources of working capital going into a company
- They are not held to the same "Fair Disclosure" restrictions that prevent nondisclosed information sharing on public companies
- Credit managers use a variety of non-public information sources such as their own company's management and sales representatives to be alerted to concerns in a public company's performance
- It is commonly known credit managers confidentially share information with other credit managers, thus collectively, their behavior helps to provide advanced insight to financial problems in public companies

Read more in Credit Research Foundation's quarterly journal article, "Assessing Public Company Financial Risk by Crowdsourcing the Research of Credit Professionals"

#### COMPANY REPORT DETAIL



## FRISK® DEEP DIVE



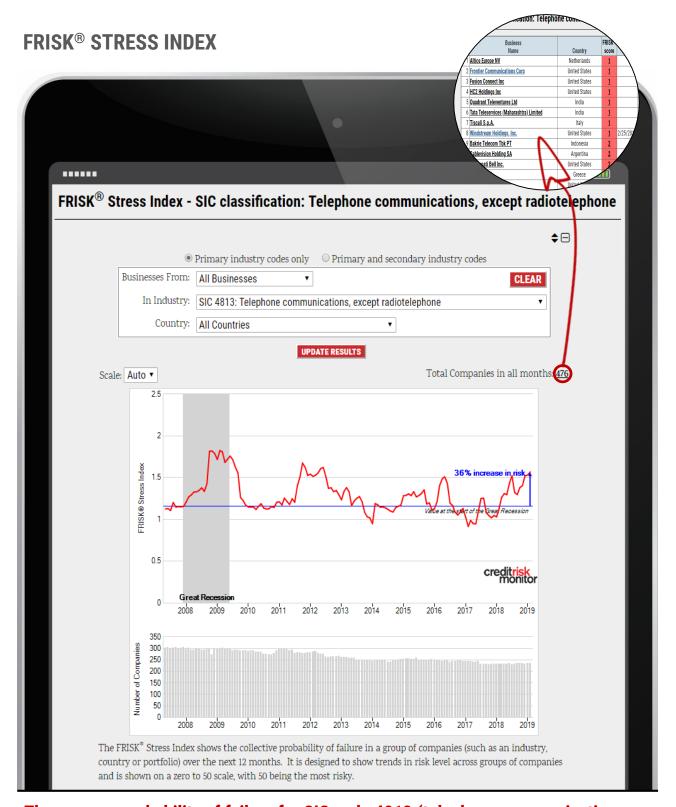
The FRISK® score (which, in this instance, reflected the crowdsourced concerns of credit managers and other subscribers) relative to the broader Communications Services industry raised an additional red flag signaling heightened risk relative to peers, as well...

MAKING IMMEDIATE ATTENTION REQUIRED.

#### ADJUSTED MARKET CAP VOLATILITY

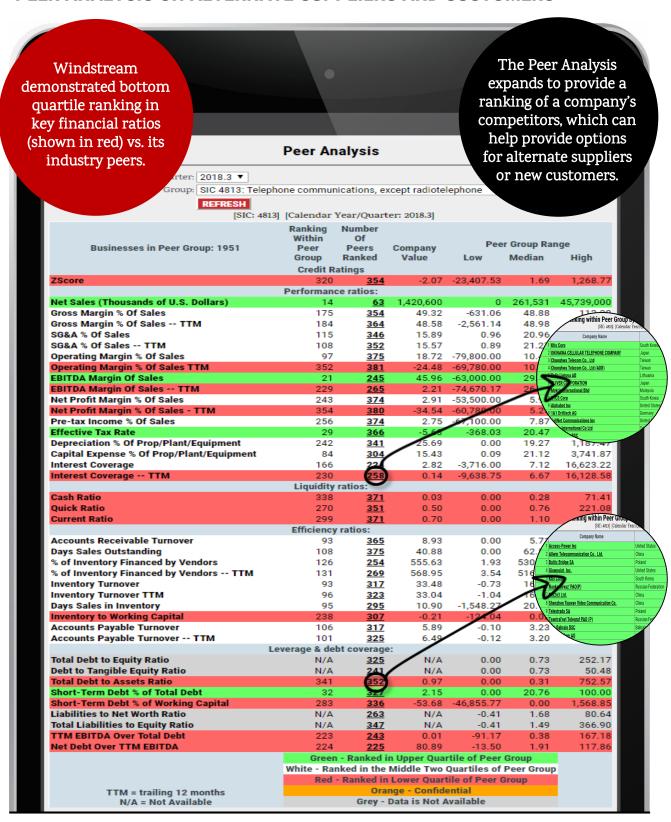


One of the inputs of the FRISK® score is a company's market cap volatility, adjusted for dividends, over the course of a year. Incorporating this information allows us to capture the "wisdom of markets" on a daily basis. This ensures our subscribers are getting the most up to date view of the risks they face since stocks tend to be more liquid and faster moving than bond prices and ratings.



The average probability of failure for SIC code 4813 (telephone communications, except radiotelephone) has increased 36% since 2007. Windstream was among the weakest names in the industry as evidenced by its FRISK® score of 1.

#### PEER ANALYSIS ON ALTERNATE SUPPLIERS AND CUSTOMERS



## **QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE RATIOS**

Pre-tax losses in all but one of the last five fiscal quarters Low interest coverage ratio & weak free cash flow generation relative to debt

## **Performance Ratios - Sequential Quarters**

Terrorina	(Thousands	of U.S. Dollars)	iidi Quai te		
	3 mos	3 mos	3 mos	3 mos	3 mos
Period Ended	9/30/2018	6/30/2018	3/31/2018	12/31/2017	9/30/2017
Net Sales \$	\$1,420,600	\$1,444,400	\$1,454,300	\$1,497,900	\$1,497,700
% change	-1.65%	-0.68%	-2.91%	0.01%	0.41%
Gross Margin \$	\$700,700	\$703,400	\$700,600	\$721,200	\$694,900
% change	-0.38%	0.40%	-2.86%	3.78%	-2.29%
% of sales	49.32%	48.70%	48.17%	48.15%	46.40%
change as % of incremental sales	n/m	n/m	n/m	13,150.00%	-267.21%
SG&A \$	\$225,800	\$224,500	\$228,800	\$226,700	\$231,800
% change	0.58%	-1.88%	0.93%	-2.20%	2.39%
% of sales	15.89%	15.54%	15.73%	15.13%	15.48%
change as % of incremental sales	n/m	n/m	n/m	-2,550.00%	88.52%
Operating margin \$	\$265,900	\$88,300	\$69,000	(\$1,847,100)	\$46,400
% change	201.13%	27.97%	103.74%	-4,080.82%	-54.73%
% of sales	18.72%	6.11%	4.74%	-123.31%	3.10%
change as % of incremental sales	n/m	n/m	n/m	-946,750.00%	-919.67%
EBITDA \$	\$652,900	\$471,000	\$448,500	(\$1,443,900)	\$413,500
% change	38.62%	5.02%	131.06%	-449.19%	-11.85%
% of sales	45.96%	32.61%	30.84%	-96.40%	27.61%
change as % of incremental sales	n/m	n/m	n/m	-928,700.00%	-911.48%
EBIT \$	\$269,100	\$100,300	\$66,700	(\$1,847,600)	\$48,100
% change	168.30%	50.37%	103.61%	-3,941.16%	-54.92%
% of sales	18.94%	6.94%	4.59%	-123.35%	3.21%
change as % of incremental sales	n/m	n/m	n/m	-947,850.00%	-960.66%
Pre-tax income \$	\$39,100	(\$124,100)	(\$156,400)	(\$2,080,400)	(\$168,300)
% change	131.51%	20.65%	92.48%	-1,136.13%	-56.27%
% of sales	2.75%	-8.59%	-10.75%	-138.89%	-11.24%
change as % of incremental sales	n/m	n/m	n/m	-956,050.00%	-993.44%
Net income (loss) \$ % change	<b>\$41,300</b> 144.08%	(\$93,700) 22.82%	( <b>\$121,400)</b> 93,39%	(\$1,835,700) -1,708.57%	(\$101,500) -49.05%
% of sales	2.91%	-6.49%	-8.35%	-1,708.57%	-49.03% -6.78%
change as % of incremental sales	2.91% n/m			-867,100.00%	-547.54%
Tax expense \$	(\$2,200)	n/m (\$30,400)	n/m (\$35,000)	(\$436,900)	(\$66,800)
Effective tax rate	-5.63%	24.50%	22.38%	21.00%	39.69%
Depreciation expense \$	\$327,700	\$314,100	\$323,300	\$340,200	\$300,600
% of sales	23.07%	21.75%	22.23%	22.71%	20.07%
% of capital expenses	166.43%	166.45%	148.58%	184.49%	138.91%
% of PP&E, net (annualized)	25.69%	24.11%	24.27%	24.93%	21.70%
Capital expenditures \$	\$196,900	\$188,700	\$217,600	\$184,400	\$216,400
% change	4.35%	-13.28%	18.00%	-14.79%	-18.15%
% of PP&E, net (annualized)	15.43%	14.49%	16.34%	13.52%	15.62%
% of working capital (annualized)	-191.30%	-201.07%	-182.21%	-161.51%	-286.91%
Interest coverage ratio	2.82	2.09	2.01	(6.20)	1.91
% change	34.84%	4.13%	132.41%	-424.59%	-12.67%
Free cash flow \$	\$19,600	\$111,700	\$21,700	\$119,700	\$55,300
% change	-82.45%	414.75%	-81.87%	116.46%	228.01%
Source:	10-Q	10-Q	10-Q	10-K	10-Q
	11/8/2018	8/9/2018	5/4/2018	2/28/2018	11/8/2018

## **QUARTERLY LEVERAGE RATIOS**

Recurring negative tangible net worth suggested loanable collateral had been exhausted Total debt
to assets ratio
afforded creditors
little degree
of protection
from loss

## **Leverage Ratios - Sequential Quarters**

(Thousands of U.S. Dollars)

	(1110 00001100	or o.o. Donars)			
Period Ended	9/30/2018	6/30/2018	3/31/2018	12/31/2017	9/30/2017
Total debt \$	\$10,431,700	\$10,626,400	\$10,734,300	\$10,675,800	\$10,752,500
% change	-1.83%	-1.01%	0.55%	-0.71%	2.43%
Stockholders' equity \$	(\$1,360,900)	(\$1,406,500)	(\$1,337,200)	(\$1,298,900)	\$521,200
% change	3.24%	-5.18%	-2.95%	-349.21%	-17.30%
Total debt to equity ratio	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	20.63
% change	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	23.85%
Tangible net worth \$	(\$5,538,000)	(\$5,629,800)	(\$5,611,100)	(\$5,595,700)	(\$5,687,000)
% change	1.63%	-0.33%	-0.28%	1.61%	-4.39%
Total assets \$	\$10,710,100	\$10,839,800	\$10,981,300	\$11,084,300	\$12,928,600
% change	-1.20%	-1.29%	-0.93%	-14.27%	1.75%
Total debt to assets ratio	0.97	0.98	0.98	0.96	0.83
% change	-0.64%	0.29%	1.50%	15.80%	0.67%
Tangible assets \$	\$6,533,000	\$6,616,500	\$6,707,400	\$6,787,500	\$6,720,400
% change	-1.26%	-1.36%	-1.18%	1.00%	1.39%
Short-term debt \$	\$223,900	\$218,000	\$212,200	\$357,900	\$202,500
% change	2.71%	2.73%	-40.71%	76.74%	2.74%
Short-term debt % of total debt	2.15%	2.05%	1.98%	3.35%	1.88%
% change	4.62%	3.78%	-41.03%	78.01%	0.30%
Short-term debt % of working capital	-53.68%	-53.65%	-61.60%	-58.59%	-66.94%
% change	-0.05%	12.89%	-5.14%	12.48%	-2.20%
Total liabilities \$	\$12 0	300°	\$12,318,500	\$12,383,200	\$12,407,400
% change	Short-t	erm debt	-0.52%	-0.20%	2.74%
Total liabilities to equity ratio		centage of	n/a	n/a	23.81
% change	-	g capital	n/a	n/a	24.23%
Total debt to EBITDA ratio (annualized)		gative in	5.98	n/a	6.50
% change		ast five	n/a	n/a	16.20%
Source:	N. Committee of the Com	rters	10-Q	10-K	10-Q
	que		5/4/2018	2/28/2018	11/9/2017

## **QUARTERLY LIQUIDITY RATIOS AND RATES OF RETURN**

	Recurring negative working capital	Liquidity Rat	ios - Seque		8	Meager ash, quick, & current ratios
	Period Ended	9/30/2018	6/30/2018	3/31/2018	12/31/2017	9/30/2017
	Current assets \$	\$957,600	\$935,200	\$943,500	\$932,500	\$1,008,800
	% change	2.40%	-0.88%	1.18%	-7.56%	8.84%
	% of short-term debt	427.69%	428.99%	444.63%	260.55%	498.17%
	Current liabilities \$	\$1,374,700	\$1,341,500	\$1,288,000	\$1,543,400	\$1,311,300
	% change	2.47%	4.15%	-16.55%	17.70%	6.80%
Q	Working capital \$	(\$417,100)	(\$406,300)	(\$344,500)	(\$610,900)	(\$302,500)
	% change	-2.66%	-17.94%	43.61%	-101.95%	-0.53%
	% of sales (annualized)	-7.34%	-7.03%	-5.92%	-10.20%	-5.05%
	Cash \$	\$37,300	\$45,300	\$60,500	\$43,400	\$56,500
	% change	-17.66%	-25.12%	39.40%	-23.19%	128.74%
	% of short-term debt	16.66%	20.78%	28.51%	12.13%	27.90%
4	Cash ratio	0.03	0.03	0.05	0.03	0.04
	% change	-19.82%	-28.09%	67.26%	-34.80%	114.43%
	Quick assets \$	\$686,300	\$669,200	\$655,300	\$686,400	\$745,300
	% change	2.56%	2.12%	-4.53%	-7.90%	8.90%
	% of short-term debt	306.52%	306.97%	308.81%	191.79%	368.05%
4	Quick ratio	0.50	0.50	0.51	0.44	0.57
	% change	0.08%	-1.97%	14.41%	-21.76%	1.97%
4	Current ratio	0.70	0.70	0.73	0.60	0.77
	% change	-0.07%	-4.83%	21.23%	-21.46%	1.91%
	Source:	10-Q 11/8/2018	10-Q 8/9/2018	10-Q 5/4/2018	10-K 2/28/2018	10-Q 11/9/2017

nable to enerate afficient returns	Rate of Retu	rn - Sequen		's	
Period Ended	3 mos 9/30/2018	3 mos 6/30/2018	3 mos 3/31/2018	3 mos 12/31/2017	3 mos 9/30/2017
Return on equity	n/a	n/a	n/a	-352.21%	-16.11%
% change	n/a	n/a	n/a	-2,086.80%	-70.85%
Return on total assets	0.38%	-0.86%	-1.10%	-15.29%	-0.79%
% change	144.63%	21.96%	92.80%	-1,830.71%	-48.91%
Return on tangible assets	0.63%	-1.41%	-1.80%	-27.18%	-1.52%
% change	144.66%	21.83%	93.38%	-1,687.32%	-48.10%
Source:	10-Q 11/8/2018	10-Q 8/9/2018	10-Q 5/4/2018	10-K 2/28/2018	10-Q 11/8/2018

## **NEWS ALERTS: A TIMELINE OF CONCERNING HEADLINES**

2/24/2018	CRMZ News Service	Windstream Holdings Inc updated financials available
Q1 2018 10-Q f a year ago.	iling – The Company rep	orted a net loss of \$121 million compared to a net loss of \$111 million
5/5/2018	CRMZ News Service	Windstream Holdings Inc updated financials available
A reverse stock delisting of the		rease the price above exchange minimums and avoid a potential
5/25/2018	GlobeNewswire	Windstream completes reverse stock split
Restructuring o	f debt with key creditors	highlighted the company's continued financial struggles.
6/6/2018	GlobeNewswire	Windstream Announces Results of Consent Solicitation to Amend Its 8.625% Senior First Lien Notes Due 2025 and Its Senior Secured Credit Facility
•		
for the worse if	ue of technical defaults. forced into a technical d	Windstream's already precarious financial position would likely turn efault.  Last Showdown Between Aurelius And Windstream Draws A Crowd In New York
for the worse if	ue of technical defaults. forced into a technical de CRMZ News Service	Windstream's already precarious financial position would likely turn efault.  Last Showdown Between Aurelius And Windstream Draws A Crowd In New York Court
for the worse if 8/3/2018	ue of technical defaults. forced into a technical de CRMZ News Service	Windstream's already precarious financial position would likely turn efault.  Last Showdown Between Aurelius And Windstream Draws A Crowd In New York Court  Cheet arrangement for increased liquidity was a financial red flag.
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## ABOUT THIS REPORT/CONTACT CREDITRISKMONITOR



CreditRiskMonitor is a financial risk analysis and news service that helps credit, supply chain and financial professionals stay ahead of and manage risk quickly, accurately and cost effectively. More than 35% of the Fortune 1000, plus over a thousand other large corporations worldwide, rely on our financial risk coverage of over 58,000 global public companies.

CreditRiskMonitor Bankruptcy Case Studies provide post-filing analyses of public company bankruptcies. Our case studies educate subscribers about methods they can apply to assess bankruptcy risk using CreditRiskMonitor's proprietary FRISK® score, robust financial database and timely news alerts.

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Contact us at: 845.230.3000 creditriskmonitor.com/contact-us