

BLUE CROSS and BLUE SHIELD

Fujitsu Teams with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota with New e-business Strategy



"As we weighed out the advantages of having four partitions tied together on the PRIMEPOWER 1000, we started to see other advantages. We liked the flexibility it gave us, the ability to combine partitions."

Blue Cross and Blue Shield

Blue Cross and Blue Shield have served the United States for more than 70 years. The Blue Cross and Blue Shield System is now the nation's largest family of health benefits companies collectively caring for 81.5 million - or more than one in four - Americans. Today Minnesota's oldest health plan has grown to cover more than 2 million people and is currently enhancing its presence in cyberspace. To take advantage of these growth opportunities, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota decided to expand into the Solaris™ Operating Environment.

The Challenge / Issues

Up until December 2000, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota depended on an older computer system that lacked the horsepower and became an obstacle to business growth. More than that, it aims at expanding its Web presence to provide the best customer service with new interactive applications. "We wanted to make a commitment to Solaris™ Operating Environment, because that was the biggest presence in the Web world," says Jerry High, Manager of Distributed Computing, Systems Engineering. The Blues placed its confidence in Fujitsu PRIMEPOWER 1000 enterprise server to do the job in higher availability and flexibility.

▣ CASE STUDY – Server

The Solution

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota settled on Fujitsu's PRIMEPOWER 1000 system, which can grow from 4 to 32 processors, and a GSS 4900 storage system. The PRIMEPOWER 1000 is used as an Oracle database server divided into four partitions, with one reserved for testing new applications. The GSS 4900 is handling 1.4 terabytes of data with a Fibre Channel connection to a SAN environment. High says. "We liked the flexibility it gave us, the ability to combine partitions. If we found ourselves short of horsepower, we could actually reconfigure it to bring more horsepower into one particular region." The extensive redundancy and hardware protection features were important to the Group.

The Benefits

After using the Fujitsu's systems, the user feedback on performance has been enthusiastic. Because of the GSS 4900 storage system, disc access is faster than before. "Queries have been running two to ten times faster. The horsepower is there," says High. "Our I/O times are greatly reduced," says High. "The wait times are very low," that is very important, he explains, to users with long-running queries, which may have taken a half-hour or an hour in the past and that can now be run in a few minutes. High also adds, "We did an analysis on the software we were using for statistical analysis, SAS, and the licensing turned out to be cheaper [on the PRIMEPOWER server] because SAS's licensing structure is based on the size of the machine". By licensing on one larger machine rather than four separate ones, he got the software savings.

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