

## A super way to cost-effectively balance the books

*“The transition to **super**NOVA has been excellent - it went in when Fujitsu said it would and it just worked - and was imperceptible to the business.”*

**Roger Hankey - IT Manager, Royal London**



### Challenge

Originally founded in 1861 as a Friendly Society, Royal London became a mutual life insurance company in 1908. The Group is now the UK's largest mutual life and pensions company, operating a number of well-known brands, including Scottish Life, Scottish Provident, Bright Grey and Ascentric.

In 2000 Royal London Group acquired United Assurance Group, which had been formed by the merger of United Friendly Insurance Plc and Refuge Assurance Plc.

United Friendly used a Fujitsu VME mainframe system to run its book of business, made up mostly of weekly collections, and this was outsourced to Capgemini in 1997. However, in 2002 Royal London decided to insource its corporate IT operations and consolidated two datacentres and the Capgemini systems into its main datacentre in Wilmslow. As part of that process, Fujitsu successfully implemented a new Trimetra NOVA 2 mainframe system to run the United Friendly book of business.

Roger Hankey, IT Manager, Royal London, says, *“The transition over to the new Fujitsu NOVA 2 system was excellent, with no technical issues, and it has served us well for quite some time. However, we eventually needed to move forward from NOVA 2 as the system was going out of support and we had to ensure the continuity of the service.”*

### Solution

Having evaluated the possibility of upgrading to a Trimetra NOVA 5 platform, Royal London decided to move to Fujitsu's new **super**NOVA VME application, which is platform independent and capable of running on any standard Windows or Linux server platform.

Tom Hardacre, Technical Services Team Manager, Royal London, explains, *“Fujitsu put forward a comprehensive and compelling proposition, including everything from the removal of the old equipment to the provision of operator training, so the decision to move to **super**NOVA was based on the obvious ease of the transition.”*

*“Even though it was relatively new, the **super**NOVA platform was seen as the best way forward and proved to offer a much more cost-effective architecture for Royal London's needs in managing a reducing book of business,”* adds Roger Hankey. *“In particular, Fujitsu worked closely with us to ensure that we could achieve our aims despite fairly challenging financial controls.”*

In order to totally de-risk the migration to the **super**NOVA system, the project was broken down into three distinct phases. Initially, Fujitsu spent 6 weeks commissioning and internally testing the new **super**NOVA configuration, installed on Fujitsu Siemens servers, in order to validate the required performance. Roger Hankey says, *“While the system testing showed that the*

### SUMMARY OF KEY FACTS

#### Organisation

Royal London

#### Services delivered

Implementation and ongoing support of a **super**NOVA VME corporate system, based on Fujitsu Siemens servers

#### Key metrics

- 7.5 million customer policies

#### Benefits

- **Improved customer experience** - implemented without interruption and delivering a robust and consistent service
- **Reduced hardware costs** - has reduced capital expenditure costs by 80% by using standard servers
- **Reduced operational costs** - has reduced datacentre services and hardware support costs by 75%
- **Ensured compliance** - no historical archiving issues that might compromise compliance with FSA regulations
- **Achieved 'green' savings** - power consumption has fallen by 50%, datacentre floor space has been cut by 60% and the use of air conditioning has been reduced
- **Improved operational flexibility** - cross-platform capability enables easy integration with other VME systems and the facility to use the same servers for non-VME applications

*superNOVA system didn't perform quite as well as expected in certain circumstances, Fujitsu was quick to give us a fix that resolved that."*

The initial phase also provided Royal London with the opportunity to train its operators and gain valuable hands-on experience of the support functions. "We were there when the system was built, so there was a lot of knowledge transfer," comments Tom Hardicre. "However, the **superNOVA** system uses the same version of VME as the NOVA 2, so many aspects of its operation were already very familiar. We were also able to reuse the same IP address for the new system, so we didn't even have to change any of the thin-client systems."

The transition over to the **superNOVA** system was then undertaken in two further steps. Firstly, the **superNOVA** node went live and was run for a week, but connected to the disk system of the NOVA 2. Then the new disk array was dropped-in and the information on both systems was duplexed and run in tandem for a further week.

Roger Hankey continues, "From a project delivery point of view the transition to **superNOVA** was excellent - it went in when Fujitsu said it would and it just worked. The risks associated with this project have also been absolutely minimal as we have always had a regression path at each stage of the project. As a result, the change-over has been pretty seamless and imperceptible to the business and the performance on the new **superNOVA** system is excellent. In fact, we've just gone through our year end and run all of our valuations and everything went through seamlessly."

As part of its ongoing relationship with Royal London, Fujitsu has recently also upgraded its Robotic Cartridge system. "Fujitsu has been a supplier to Royal London for many years and we maintain a regular dialogue as we value its input into how we can exploit new technology, both inside and outside the VME arena," explains Roger Hankey. "It's a very big, solid and well thought out organisation with a diverse range of skills and knowledge that it can bring to bear and we've never had a reason not to trust its advice."

### Benefits

The **superNOVA** solution implemented and supported by Fujitsu is enabling Royal London to:

- **Improve customer experience** - implemented without interruption to the business and now delivering a robust and consistent service to required performance levels
- **Reduce hardware costs** - has reduced capital expenditure costs by 80% by using standard Windows or Linux servers, rather than a dedicated mainframe system
- **Reduce operational costs** - has reduced datacentre services, including hosting and power usage, and hardware support costs by 75%
- **Ensure compliance** - as all the data, formats and functions of the core VME applications remain the same there are no historical archiving issues that might compromise compliance with stringent FSA regulations
- **Achieve 'green' savings** - power consumption has fallen by around 50%, datacentre floor space has been cut by 60% and the use of air conditioning has been reduced
- **Improve operational flexibility** - provides a cross-platform capability enabling easy integration with other VME systems eg. disaster recover, and also the facility to use the same servers for other non-VME applications.

Roger Hankey says, "The ongoing cost profile of the **superNOVA** is significantly better than our previous mainframe as there are now no large capital expenditure costs and it will have a much lower total cost of ownership (TCO). It has also enabled us to move our application set forward without the need for any reengineering, so it was a straightforward migration. As a result, we have ensured that we can cost-effectively continue to service our existing applications, while also providing the flexibility to enhance and expand them in the future."

### Approach

Developed in the 1970s, VME is one of world's most stable mainframe operating systems and powers the UK government's top three financial systems, including the Inland Revenue with 100,000 users. This highly scalable system continues to provide unparalleled performance and Fujitsu has promised to support VME until at least 2020.

As part of that commitment Fujitsu developed **superNOVA**, so that VME is completely platform independent and no longer has to run on proprietary hardware. Applications running in a VME environment remain the same so no recompilation is required. All the existing features of a VME environment, such as CAFS, IDMSX and TPMSX, continue to be provided unchanged - but this hardware independence allows the exploitation of the very latest technology as soon as it becomes available.

Tom Hardicre adds, "As we can now use any Wintel platform we have actually been able to make a five year jump in processing and disk technology, but without sacrificing the reliability, security and performance of VME. Our approach is, if it isn't broke, why fix it?"

### Expertise

With over 40 years experience of supporting the needs of customers, Fujitsu has a proven track record in providing complex systems integration and application development and management services that reduce costs, improve productivity and customer services and deliver a compelling return on investment.

"Fujitsu's project management skills are very good and we worked together well as one team," confirms Tom Hardicre. "Fujitsu was also very flexible over our working hours and need for business continuity - it understood that and resolved any problems quickly without the loss of service."

Roger Hankey agrees, "The relationship between Fujitsu and Royal London is extremely good and we work together well to get the job done without compromising the business - it's a very collaborative rather than contractual approach and that's how it needs to be."

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