CASE STUDY

mChek unprecedented scalability for Oracle9*i* RAC

"If we need to bring an extra server online to cope with a burst of transactions, we can do so in a matter of minutes from the Primergy management console. We can allocate and manage resources dynamically to suit our immediate needs, with zero application downtime."

Steven Atkinson, Chief Technology Officer, mChek

This U.K.-based provider of mobile solutions needed a mix of robust computing power and flexible processing capacity to meet unpredictable demands for its consumer services. The Primergy® BladeFrame® system* provides the scalability to meet peak demands coupled with exceptional availability and performance.

The challenge

mChek's business relies on its ability to rapidly deliver mobile solutions which address specific customer requirements. Because of the consumer-led nature of the services it offers, the transaction volumes handled by mChek systems are very unpredictable, with bursts of activity and high transaction peaks. This demands a proven mix of robust computing power and flexible processing capacity not available from traditional big-box servers.

According to mChek CTO Steven Atkinson, "Traditional server architectures were simply too inflexible for our needs and our customers' needs. Many of our services are consumer-led and can generate huge transaction volumes very quickly. This means our hardware and processing platforms have to scale rapidly to suit the application with minimal management."

The Solution

As a result, Atkinson and his team evaluated blade server options. mChek chose the Primergy BladeFrame system, which was deployed by technology integrator Morse in early 2003. "We found that the BladeFrame offers a better price/performance ratio and is more mature than other solutions on the market," Atkinson noted. "Also, Primergy's track record is impressive."

Solution components

- Primergy BladeFrame system: running Intel® Xeon™ processors, the Red Hat® Linux® operating system and mChek's transaction-processing

Customer benefits

- Better price/performance ratio
- More mature than other solutions
- Delivers benefits without operational complexity
- PAN Manager Software
- Increasing processing capacity to more than 200 transactions in a second
- Provides the ideal platform to deploy truly advanced Mobile payment solutions

The Project

The BladeFrame is populated with seven two-way Primergy Processing Blade™ modules running Intel® Xeon™ processors, the Red Hat® Linux® operating system and mChek's transaction-processing and billing applications, which are linked to an Oracle9*i* RAC database. Disk storage for the database and applications is provided by NetApps filer.

Running Oracle on Linux and Intel delivers exceptional business agility, driving down total cost of ownership to a fraction of proprietary UNIX systems. A pre-integrated, highly scalable platform, the BladeFrame enables data centre managers to deliver the benefits of Oracle9*i* RAC without operational complexity.

A record of success

Atkinson reports that implementation and commissioning went smoothly and points out a key benefit of the BladeFrame: iPAN Manager™ software. "If we need to bring an extra server online to cope with a burst of transactions, we can do so in a matter of minutes from the Primergy management console. We can allocate and manage resources dynamically to suit our immediate needs, with zero application downtime." Atkinson concluded, "With the BladeFrame supporting our applications, we are getting close to five nines (99.999%) uptime and processing capacity of more than 200 transactions per second. This provides the performance and robustness we need to support the peaks and troughs of transaction processing, and gives mChek the ideal platform on which to deploy truly advanced, consumer mobile-payment solutions."

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