FUJITSU

Mapping Australia's energy future

The market for electricity is changing and the grid needs to adapt. ElectraNet is evolving to ensure South Australia's electricity transmission network provides secure, reliable and stable power. In order to create cleaner, smarter energy, the business needs to understand its data to make informed, agile decisions. Working with Fujitsu to upgrade its SAP® environment, data tasks that previously took minutes are down to a few seconds.

About the customer

ElectraNet owns and manages South Australia's high voltage transmission network. This network, nearly 6,000km in length, transports electricity over long distances, from traditional and renewable generators, to where it is needed. This energy powers homes, businesses, industry and communities across metropolitan, rural and remote areas.

Industry: Energy & Utilities   Location: Australia   People: 400+   Web: electranet.com.au

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Erin Aslanidis, Business Intelligence Analyst, ElectraNet

10x

reduction in the data footprint, from 545GB to 54GB

Upgrading business intelligence

The energy business is like many other businesses: it is fuelled by data. In order to drive innovation and efficiency, ElectraNet wanted business users to have better access to its wealth of operational data.

The business had used SAP BW 7.4 on a non-HANA database to handle its data warehousing needs. However, with the underlying hardware reaching end of life, the limitations of the platform were becoming clear. The dashboard was clunky, overall performance was slow and it provided little beyond the SAP data.

ElectraNet decided to upgrade to SAP BW/4HANA to modernise the legacy data warehouse environment and provide a foundation for next generation business analytics. To do so, ElectraNet needed the right technology partner.

"The old system had been in place for over ten years and created lots of pain points," explains Erin Aslanidis, Business Intelligence Analyst, ElectraNet. "Creating a pathway to SAP BW/4HANA was obvious.

"We asked SAP for recommendations which suggested Fujitsu. Fujitsu's local presence, technical expertise and SAP experience made it a good partner to deliver this important project."

Introducing remote conversion

Fujitsu employed the new remote conversion process, only available as part of SAP's Early Adopter Care programme, to migrate the old platform to the new. This created parallel environments and migrated only the requisite data models, reports and associated objects, enabling ElectraNet to eliminate years of obsolete objects.

The process allowed parallel loading of the existing BW 7.4 environment and the new BW/4HANA environment. In turn, this supported a 'soft' go live, allowing ElectraNet to run both environments in tandem and perform reconciliation between the new environment and existing production environment. This approach built confidence prior to the cut-over to production.

"We're proud to be the first Australian customer to go live with this new approach. Working closely with Fujitsu and SAP, we spent six months on the conversion process and then migrated to the new environment over one weekend," continues Aslanidis. "The conversion tools enabled us to extract all the necessary data and table structures, and then automatically populate the new platform."

Faster performance, smaller data footprint

ElectraNet immediately noticed a significant increase in performance. Tasks that previously took minutes are down to a few seconds; query requests are now 73% faster. This responsiveness made users more productive and helped to attract more users to the system. Beforehand, many staff chose to use offline spreadsheets instead of the BW 7.4 system; now, they engage with BW/4HANA.

The new environment has dramatically reduced the data footprint, from 545GB to 54GB due to data compression of columnar table storage. At the same time, there has been a reduction in batch load times from over six hours to under two, even without employing HANA optimisations.

"The biggest benefit is the speed," concludes Aslanidis. "It makes reporting much faster and reduces frustration among users.

"Fujitsu's support and technical SAP knowledge was critical in making this project a success and helping to upskill me and my team so we can manage the new BW/4HANA platform."