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Transforming a critical legacy platform

The Virtual Machine Environment (VME) is Fujitsu's flagship mainframe operating system; however, Fujitsu had stopped selling VME as a licenced product. That meant Royal London Group, which had relied on VME for 30 years, had to migrate to a new Modern VME platform (MVE). The new solution has transformed the environment and provided a futureproof pathway for further growth.

About the customer

Royal London is the largest mutual life insurance, pensions and investment company in the UK, with assets under management of £148bn, 8.8m policies in force and 4,412 employees. Figures quoted are as at 31 December 2020. It has a number of specialist businesses that together form one big Royal London Group, allowing its customers to save for the future, purchase protection and invest with confidence and clarity.

Industry: **Financial Services**   Location: **UK**   People: **4,412**   Web: **royallondon.com**

Challenge

When Royal London Group's critical Fujitsu VME platform faced end of life, the company had to migrate millions of policies hosted on it. Royal London Group chose Fujitsu's MVE and needed to ensure a seamless and risk-free migration.

Solution

- Fujitsu used discovery tooling to explore and map a range of applications, some of which were 30 years old
- It built a new MVE platform in parallel and migrated the policies

Outcomes

- MVE is a more supportable environment for its customers, providing a reliable pathway for the future
- Opportunity to cross-platform solutions in other business areas
- Pay-as-you-go model increases financial flexibility

millions

of Royal London Group policies are now hosted on the Fujitsu MVE platform

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Developed in the mid-70s by ICL, the Virtual Machine Environment (VME) is Fujitsu's flagship mainframe operating system. It is at the heart of Royal London Group's critical core business services, however, the company wanted to shift to a more service-based environment and transform its approach to IT. It wanted to maintain the integrity and accessibility of its legacy closed book assurance system, built on VME, while providing a pathway for future stability.

Royal London Group approached Fujitsu for advice and was recommended to migrate to Fujitsu's Modern VME (MVE) platform, which assures affordable longevity, supportability and security into the future through the use of modern code and more readily available skills.

Fujitsu had stopped selling VME as a licenced product at the end of 2020, so instead it had created a pathway for further evolution through MVE. The next step was to migrate millions of Royal London Group's policies across three separate books.

Planning a careful migration

Over the course of 18 months, Fujitsu used discovery tooling to explore and map a range of applications, some of which were 30 years old. It then produced a secure clone of the existing VME platform and remediated and realigned all the components that were being changed.

Fujitsu also identified workload streams to move from the existing VME superNOVA platform to the new MVE. These ran in parallel to trial and test the solution, enabling a swift cutover during one weekend.

"The process started in mid-2019 with an initial review of the code and routines to determine any items that may require some additional effort to migrate or were not compatible with the new environment," adds Malcolm Graham, Supplier Relationship Manager at Royal London Group. "Right from the first request to clone the data, the project team has operated in an exemplary manner and has put us at ease with their professionalism and risk averse approach to all activities."

A platform fit for the future

MVE is a far more supportable environment relative to VME; this means the new solution will allow Fujitsu to service Royal London Group's customer base in-line with the company's long-term strategy. Fujitsu has also modernised the platform that MVE uses to align with industry standards, making skills more available, allowing the company to tap into a wider talent base.

It also opens the door to cross-platform solutions in other areas of the business while introducing enhanced monitoring, which provides better visibility of operations. Moreover, Fujitsu's services are available on a 'pay-as-you-go' model, meaning there are no costly upfront investments.

"The scope, scale and complexity of the work completed in late July after months of collaborative effort, with very few issues encountered over the cutover weekend and beyond in to the first production periods," explains Malcolm Graham. "Fujitsu then put in place a comprehensive intensive post-delivery care package which provided early assessment and resolution of the few issues which were encountered. This provided the users of the new platform with considerable reassurance."

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