

Energizing business intelligence:

Health Data Management Solutions engages HP to enhance its BI platform



"The combination of HP, SAS®9, and Futrix has made us more efficient. The market is responding positively to our service offering and the flexible power our infrastructure provides."

—Jonathan Kaye, President, Health Data Management Solutions (HDMS)

Business need:

With health insurance costs continuing to climb at double-digit annual rates, employers are increasingly turning to business intelligence (BI) tools and services to analyze health plan effectiveness, costs, and utilization. Enter Health Data Management Solutions and the HDMS DARTsm service. DART provides web-based analysis and reporting tools, which allow large national and multinational corporations to drill down into health plan data to detect trends, model changes, and evaluate financial and clinical outcomes. Demand for the DART service grew so rapidly following its fall 2003 launch, that HDMS quickly determined the company needed to upgrade its technology platform to deliver the reliability, availability, and flexibility HDMS clients expected.

Solution overview:

HDMS chose a scalable platform – based on HP Integrity servers running the HP-UX 11i operating system, SAS®9 intelligence software, and the Futrix BI suite – to provide flexible, web-accessible business intelligence and online analytical processing. This new solution enabled the company's staff to offer a superior data analysis service – increasing the client roster for web-based BI service from two to 26 in just 18 months, and providing flexible analysis and reporting tools for the company's growing client base.



BI fitness plan from HP

In the summer of 2004, HDMS began looking at alternatives to the Dell and Microsoft® Windows® platform, upon which they initially implemented DART. HDMS, a long-time SAS shop, had created its DART service on SAS and Futrix, an off-the-shelf BI suite built on an SAS foundation. One of the key objectives in its 2004 upgrade to the DART infrastructure was migration to SAS®9. This newest version of the SAS Intelligence Platform offers simplified user interfaces that make it easier for clients to perform queries against detailed health plan data.

According to HDMS President Jonathan Kaye, the company considered many vendors, but soon focused on an HP platform for its SAS and Futrix upgrade. "We liked the fact that HP had a long-standing relationship with SAS and had already certified the SAS®9 solution on its HP-UX systems," Kaye explains. "Our IT staff had a lot of prior experience with HP servers and knew them to be highly reliable, scalable, and easy to administer."

HDMS chose standards-based HP Integrity rx4640 servers with Intel® Itanium® 2 processors to provide powerful front- and back-end support for its DART data analysis and reporting service. The company also selected the highly reliable HP Integrity rx2620 server for a planned offsite business-continuity center. The HP-UX 11i operating system provided a robust and secure foundation for the demanding SAS environment, and the pre-tested SAS/Futrix BI solution enabled fast, worry-free implementation.

HP StorageWorks Modular Smart Array 30 Enclosures equipped with 2 TB of data-storage capacity provide storage for SAS temporary files. "The HP StorageWorks MSA30 matches our model for efficient growth with its modular design, allowing us to treat storage as a utility and preserve our storage investment as we progress," Kaye notes.



At a glance

Hardware:

- 2 HP Integrity rx4640-8 servers with Intel Itanium 2 processors
- HP Integrity rx2620-2 servers with Intel Itanium 2 processors
- 3 HP StorageWorks Modular Smart Array 30 (MSA30) Enclosures with Ultra320 SCSI disk drives

Software:

- HP-UX 11i v2 operating system
- Futrix Enterprise Business Intelligence Suite for SAS platform
- SAS®9 Intelligence Platform from SAS Institute Inc.

HP Services:

- On-going hardware support

"Our conversion to the HP platform and SAS®9 went very smoothly, with no downtime," Kaye notes. "Our clients now have improved web-based services, including greater reporting flexibility. For our company, the move to HP-UX and HP Integrity servers has brought improved stability and reliability. We never have to reboot, administration is easier, and we can scale to match our growth rate, which keeps our total cost of ownership low."

Efficiency yields fat-free growth

Kaye attributes his company's strong growth in part to the efficient, scalable, reliable, and flexible platform supporting the DART service. Since implementing the DART web-based service, the HDMS client roster has grown from two to 26 – including household names such as Lowe's, Marriott, Sears, Circuit City, and Charter Communications.

The company has maintained its efficiency despite experiencing impressive growth. This is mainly attributed to its flexibility in operations and DART service capabilities. Concludes Kaye, "The combination of HP, SAS®9, and Futrix has made us more efficient, and helps us deliver the advanced service and reporting capabilities our clients demand."

About Health Data Management Solutions, Inc.

Founded in 1994, Health Data Management Solutions (www.hdms.com) is a data management and analysis company that offers flexible, high-value information solutions to all entities with a financial stake in the healthcare industry. In 2000, HDMS became a wholly owned subsidiary of ActiveHealth Management. Headquartered in Beachwood, Ohio (near Cleveland), HDMS also maintains an office in Chicago.

Challenges

- Provide flexible, web-accessible business intelligence and online analytical processing (OLAP) solution for large clients
- Increase marketing leverage over competitors
- Meet expectations of critical benefit consultants in RFP process
- Manage growth in client base with efficient IT platform

Solution

- Upgraded critical business insight solution to reliable, scalable platform based on HP-UX 11i operating system, HP Integrity servers, SAS®9, and Futrix
- Combination of 64-bit HP Integrity servers running HP-UX 11i operating system delivers reliability, scalability, and stability to support rapid business growth

Results

- Increased client roster for web-based BI service from two to 26 – in just 18 months
- Provides flexible analysis and reporting tools to growing client base
- Improved power, reliability, and scalability of mission critical BI platform
- Enhanced corporate stability and profitability by reducing costs of providing service, and increasing ease of administration
- Enables superior data analysis service

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