Hewlett Packard Enterprise

Proximus reports 100% uptime for mission-critical converged billing application

HPE NonStop X with Intel® Xeon® processors boost performance for surging workloads

Objective
Improve performance and capacity for mission-critical billing application and rapidly growing numbers of call detail records (CDRs) that track service usage of customers

Approach
Upgrade previous generation of HPE Integrity NonStop servers to HPE Integrity NonStop X to treat 600+ million CDRs per month in real time and provide a stable, open platform for the future
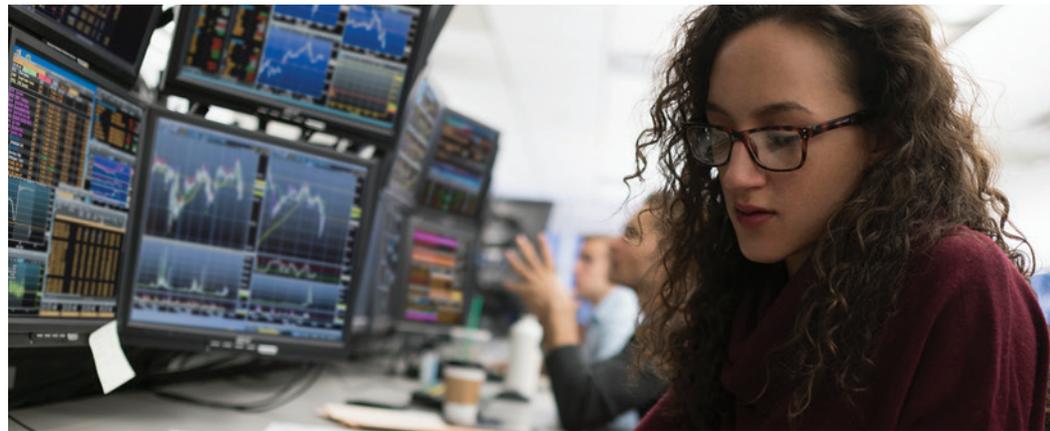
IT Matters
- 100% uptime for mission-critical billing application
- 2X faster CDR processing over previous platform
- 1.5X faster execution of online transactions

Business Matters
- Meets compliance requirements with instant usage alerts to customers
- Boosts customer satisfaction and loyalty with up-to-the-minute account updates
- Enables application growth and enhancement with no performance, capacity, or stability concerns

100% uptime for mission-critical applications

Proximus is the number one telecom player in Belgium—and the company wants to keep it that way. Competition is fierce, but Proximus has a unique advantage, offering customers fixed line, mobile, internet, and TV all under one brand. This "quadruple play" has been hugely successful, but it brought new challenges to the company's billing system.

Customers expect a single, consolidated invoice each month, yet they also want to see how their charges break down by service. In addition, they want the ability to check their accounts and usage information any time, whether it's online from home or on their mobile device. This requires converged billing based on real-time call data records (CDRs), which are generated for all user activity whether it's sending a text message, streaming a video, or calling a friend.

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— Bernard Dellicour, Infrastructure Manager, Proximus

The challenge is, Proximus now generates about 600 million CDRs per month; millions for every call, text or internet search customers perform day and night. For nearly two decades, Proximus has relied on Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) and HPE NonStop servers to run its custom-developed billing application. However, the surge in CDRs resulting from converged billing and overall business growth pushed the previous-generation NonStop platform to the limits of its capacity, requiring an upgrade.

Bernard Dellicour, infrastructure manager at Proximus, explains the decision to stay with NonStop for the upgrade: "Our billing application is highly customized and built on NonStop SQL. Moreover, it is providing us with 100% uptime, so there was never a consideration about not continuing with NonStop."

HPE NonStop X provides platform for the future

Proximus migrated from its previous Intel® Itanium® processor-based NonStop platform to the latest HPE Integrity NonStop X server based on the Intel® Xeon® processor. The company deployed five NonStop X systems: one for production, which is replicated to a second system in a remote site for disaster recovery, and one system each for development, test and training, and user acceptance.

"We chose to upgrade to HPE NonStop X because it made more sense to have a platform for the future that we can grow on and is fully supported long term by HPE," Mr. Dellicour explains. "The Intel® Xeon® processor x86 platform also provides greater capabilities, and was expected to be significantly faster. Software licensing costs on the Intel® Xeon® processor x86 platform are also lower. So it was smarter to go with NonStop X."

Proximus engaged HPE Pointnext to help perform the system and data migration, ensuring a successful outcome. The Pointnext team worked directly with Mr. Dellicour and his team to migrate each of the five systems, one per weekend, to avoid disruption of business services.

Mr. Dellicour remarks, "The people from HPE Pointnext were onsite with us to manage the migration and handle any issues that came up. They really know what they're talking about, so it was a big help for the project. They provided good communication and collaboration with our team. Working with HPE Pointnext, I had no doubt that the migration would be a success."

Higher performance to improve customer satisfaction

Since moving to NonStop X based on the Intel® Xeon® processor, Proximus can now process CDRs two times faster than on its previous platform. And the billing application got a huge performance boost with online transactions now executing 1.5 times faster. This is central to improving customer satisfaction, as well as meeting Belgian regulatory requirements. For example, any time a customer roams outside the country and usage charges reach a certain amount,

Proximus is required to immediately notify the customer. With the speed and capacity of NonStop X, the company's online systems can cover ongoing CDR growth and upload CDRs in real time to continue supporting this notification.

The billing application also affects other aspects of the business. More than 40 systems are integrated with NonStop X to extract CDR and billing data. One example is customer relationship management (CRM), which is critical to understanding customer interests and concerns. By ensuring high performance for billing, Proximus can run CRM and other business applications faster to improve responsiveness and service for its customers, driving greater retention and uncovering opportunities to offer additional services.

Mr. Dellicour points out, "Last year we introduced several new residential and business packages, supported by a major advertising campaign. This brought in a lot of new customers, which also increased the number of CDRs. If we weren't able to handle the surge that would have been a bad return on our investment. Instead, we absorbed the increase with no problem, so the company benefited with added revenue streams."

Customer at a glance

Application
• Custom-developed billing and call detail records

Hardware
• HPE Integrity NonStop X Servers

Software
• HPE NonStop Operating Environment

• HPE NonStop SQL Database

HPE Pointnext services
• HPE Datacenter Platform Migration Consulting

• HPE Proactive Care

Enables ongoing business growth

Proximus continues to expand its market reach and develop new capabilities and products to enhance service offerings for its customers. One ongoing project is deploying high-speed fiber connections to the households the company serves. This will require additional development in the billing application to manage services on the fiber network. And Mr. Dellicour is confident NonStop X will handle the additional workload.

"With NonStop X based on the Intel® Xeon® processor we will be able to continue growing and expanding our billing application with no concern about performance, capacity or stability."

He concludes, "If we have questions or technical issues that come up as we add capabilities, the HPE Pointnext team is always there for us. They are well informed and any time we ask something, they work with us to find a solution. HPE overall has been a great partner. I feel they are open with us and committed to helping Proximus be successful with NonStop X."

Learn more at
hpe.com/info/nonstop

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