

World's Largest Building Society Adapts and Advances with Converged Network

HP success story



Nationwide Building Society, the world's largest building society, has a long-standing relationship with Cisco and HP in the provision and support of technology for its data networking. A Cisco-based, Internet Protocol environment connects Nationwide's 700 UK branches, 2,200 ATMs, 200 intermediaries, call centers and back-office operations. Acting as prime contractor, HP managed the deployment of a SAN infrastructure integrating a Cisco Optical Network Switch 15540 Extended Services Platform with dense wavelength division multiplexing and Cisco MDS 9509 Multilayer Directors. While lowering costs, this infrastructure keeps pace with ever-larger volumes of transactions and data as well as the latest disaster-tolerance standards.



Nationwide Building Society [www.nationwide.co.uk] is the world's largest building society. Today serving more than 10 million members, Nationwide remains true to the mission of these member-owned savings and loan associations, which first emerged during the Industrial Revolution to help workers buy homes. From the start, building societies have emphasized simplicity and convenience and, unlike profit-driven financial institutions, they turn surpluses into member benefits such as competitive mortgage rates.

With more than £100 billion in assets, Nationwide ranks among the UK's top ten retail banking, savings and loan organizations. Committed to staying mutual, Nationwide continually innovates to enhance and streamline member services. Nationwide pioneered Internet-based retail banking in the UK and offers an ever-expanding portfolio of financial products through a variety of channels. Its fastest-growing medium, the Internet, already serves more than 15 percent of its members.

Freeing members to choose when, where and how they do business, Nationwide has implemented an Internet Protocol (IP)-based network that connects its 700 branches, 2,200 ATMs, 200 intermediaries, call centers and back-office operations. This state-of-the-art network based on Cisco Catalyst 6500 series switches transforms Nationwide's corporate LAN into a next-generation distribution infrastructure that can keep pace with ever-larger volumes of transactions and data and support data and voice convergence.



A scalable, modular storage area network (SAN) based on Cisco MDS 9509 Multilayer Directors supports 800 HP ProLiant servers that run business-critical applications and access 40 terabytes of member and transaction data. The intelligent, Fiber Channel SAN integrates storage operations within Nationwide's network and, by streamlining SAN maintenance, cuts the cost of storage provision.

"Reliability is our business," says Arthur Amos, head of technology infrastructure for Swindon-based Nationwide, which employs 15,000 people. "We expect up to 25 percent of our transactions to occur over the Web. In the Internet world, there's no hiding place: 100 percent availability is a must. Meanwhile, we're experiencing high levels of growth in traffic and storage. We worked with HP and Cisco to move to a next-generation SAN solution that will meet our stringent availability requirements and support an expected fivefold increase in data within three years.

"We aim to be market leaders," Amos continues. "Our customers demand higher levels of service and do far more transactions with us than ever before. Working with Cisco and HP, we gained an infrastructure that allows us to drive up the quality and range of our services and at the same time drive down the cost per transaction."

Alliance simplifies complexities of convergence

Member-oriented Nationwide uses advanced technologies to keep pace with ceaseless competitive challenges, ever-higher consumer expectations and evolving regulatory requirements.

Anticipating Basel II Capital Accord standards for disaster recovery, Nationwide saw the opportunity to proactively prepare for compliance and at the same time improve the flexibility, scalability and efficiency of its network. Forward-looking Nationwide envisioned the network as its medium for new, data-rich services and customer relationship management (CRM) initiatives.

Taking advantage of their long-established strategic alliance, HP and Cisco combined their complementary strengths to specify a solution for Nationwide that builds upon the Society's extensive investment in Cisco network solutions and HP technology expertise. Under the HP and Cisco Strategic Alliance, the two companies pooled their resources, including Cisco's industry-leading IP networking products and HP expertise in converged enterprise infrastructures, to jointly develop a proposal that met all of Nationwide's needs—not just its requirement to comply with more stringent disaster-tolerance standards.

Before selecting the solution from Cisco and HP, Nationwide tested various vendors' switching products to compare their performance and functionality; and also evaluated and scored the qualifications of multiple systems integrators.

"The HP and Cisco solution came out top," says Amos. "We look for reliability, stability and simplicity in our whole IT infrastructure and in every component—servers, networks, data, storage devices, switches. We chose first-rate technology from key companies that we have complete confidence in. HP's proposal with Cisco products fit our bill. Each is a preeminent industry leader with a proven technical roadmap going forward and the R&D investments to remain at the forefront of the marketplace. And we trust their ability to deliver."



Trusted to deliver

Nationwide has a long track record of successful collaborations with HP and Cisco, including the implementation of a new contact center in Sheffield that will eventually employ up to 180 advisors. HP consultants and Nationwide IT professionals are jointly deploying the converged environment, which is based on Cisco IP Contact Center products.

HP NonStop 'S' Series S74000 systems run Nationwide's ATM and credit card validation systems. HP supports these systems with a 24x7 HP Mission Critical Continuous Availability Service contract that guarantees resolution within four hours. Under the customized service agreement, HP Services personnel provide a series of integrated, enterprise-class services from planning and analysis to both proactive and reactive support.

And as Nationwide's preferred supplier for Intel® systems in its data centers, HP acquires, custom-configures and supports the organization's 2,300 HP ProLiant DL360, DL380, DL580 and ML570 servers under an HP Integrated Support contract. An HP Services support team works onsite at Nationwide to provide these services. HP Services also manages the support of third-party laptops and printers at Nationwide Trust, a Nationwide subsidiary.

"We aim to be market leaders. Our customers demand higher levels of service and do far more transactions with us than ever before. Working with Cisco and HP, we gained an infrastructure that allows us to drive up the quality and range of our services and at the same time drive down the cost per transaction."

—Arthur Amos
Head of Technology Infrastructure
Nationwide Building Society

“HP is involved in every aspect of support for key elements of our IT infrastructure,” says Amos. “This essential help and advice extend to maintaining high levels of availability across a range of services as well as offering guidance on the future development of our SAN environment. HP provides us with significant expertise to complement our own in-house skills and ensures that we remain at the leading edge in the development of our networks.”

Collaborating to satisfy multiple needs—on time and within budget

As prime contractor and systems integrator, HP provided a single point of contact throughout the planning, development and implementation of the new SAN environment and completed the complex project on time and within budget. The HP Services project team comprised a project manager, solution architect and technical architect as well as HP’s own Cisco-certified network engineers.

Working closely with Cisco, HP Services managed the deployment and testing of the new environment, which provides seamless recovery between Nationwide’s primary and backup data centers via a fiber-based Cisco Optical Network Switch (ONS) 15540 Extended Services Platform that employs dense wavelength division multiplexing (DWDM). Expanding throughput to support real-time processing of data and transactions that are doubling in volume each year are 2,000 new ports that directly connect to data-center servers.

The project encompassed installation of the SAN, DWDM and fiber components; replacement of all storage switches with Cisco MDS units; Fibernet’s deployment of 174km of dark fiber; and installation of 2,000 access points.

“All of the companies involved worked together as a team under HP’s leadership,” says Amos. “The entire process went smoothly. We did a lot of up-front planning, and we all understood our common goals as well as our respective roles.”

HP Services supports the SAN, including all Cisco products and the fiber component, with a 24x7 HP Mission Critical Continuous Availability Service contract that guarantees resolution within four hours. The contract includes the consulting and support services of an onsite technical manager from HP Services with Certified Cisco Internetwork Expert (CCIE) accreditation.

Increasing speed, reach and ease of innovation

Working with HP and Cisco, Nationwide is creating an IT infrastructure as dynamic as its business. With business and IT synchronized to capitalize on change, Nationwide has the ability to rapidly develop and distribute products and services based on a real-time view of each member across all of its channels. And at the same time, consolidation of people, processes and technologies streamlines support, lowering the cost per transaction.

The Cisco-based infrastructure allows Nationwide to make more productive use of skilled technical personnel, who can now view and manage the SAN fabric as part of their network rather than monitor and support a separate set of storage devices. At the same time, the infrastructure reduces the cost of storage provision and supports the planned data and processing growth.

Integrating Nationwide’s local and wide area networks and SAN environment, the infrastructure’s Cisco IP-based switching platform advances Nationwide toward enterprise-wide consolidation of telephony, data, storage and networking.

“Our use of common technology enables us to respond rapidly and efficiently to opportunities while controlling our costs,” says Amos. “As we consolidate and integrate our environment, we choose to work with a few key technology companies with strengths that complement our internal expertise and help us gain the best value from this technology. We’ve had a long-term relationship with Cisco and HP, recognized industry leaders that have always provided us with first-rate service.

“Working with HP and Cisco,” concludes Amos, “we’ve gained an adaptable infrastructure that can evolve as our markets grow and diversify and keep pace with regulatory changes. These gains translate into better services to all of our stakeholders, including our employees and intermediaries and above all, our 10 million members.”

Challenges

- Basel II Capital Accord advances standards for disaster tolerance
- Competitors and technologies continually raise the bar in retail financial services
- Multiple technology platforms increase IT cost and complexity and hinder agility
- Transaction and data volumes double each year, taxing capacity of systems

Solutions

HP Services

- Prime contracting, integration and consulting services to plan, develop and integrate SAN and Contact Center solutions using Cisco products
- HP Mission Critical Continuous Availability Service contracts for corporate LAN and HP NonStop 'S' Series S74000 systems
- HP Integrated Support contract to custom-configure, install and support 2,300 HP ProLiant servers; and support a subsidiary's laptops and printers

Hardware

- Cisco Catalyst 6500, 3400, 2900 and 1700 series switches
- Cisco Optical Network Switch (ONS) 15540 Extended Services Platform with dense wavelength division multiplexing (DWDM)
- Cisco MDS 9509 Multilayer Directors

Software

- CiscoWorks network management software
- Cisco Internet Protocol Contact Center (IPCC) suite

Results

- Compliance with evolving regulatory standards, including Basel II implications for disaster recovery
- Adaptability to new technologies and business processes that support rapid innovation in member services
- Scalability to keep pace with ever-larger volumes of data and transactions
- Lower cost per transaction
- Platform that enables enterprise-wide IT integration, including contact-center consolidation, for even greater flexibility and efficiency

To learn more, visit www.hp.com

© 2004 Hewlett-Packard Development Company, L.P. The information contained herein is subject to change without notice. The only warranties for HP products and services are set forth in the express warranty statements accompanying such products and services. Nothing herein should be construed as constituting an additional warranty. HP shall not be liable for technical or editorial errors or omissions contained herein. Intel is a registered US trademark of Intel Corporation. Printed in the USA.

