Kela invests in improving service delivery for Finland's citizens

Capitalizing on new functionality to gain efficiencies and simplify IT management

Overview

Growing demand for services

Meeting steadily rising service demands in a resource-challenged environment requires Kela to continually improve the performance and efficiency of its operations.

Stepping up performance and control

Kela upgraded its core database infrastructure to an IBM DB2 10 for z/OS platform and optimized it with an IBM Tivoli OMEGAMON XE for DB2 Performance Expert tool.

A new level of efficiency

Kela expects to reduce its mainframe CPU requirements by up to 15 percent for key applications while simplifying and speeding the deployment of new applications.

Solution Components:

Software

- IBM® DB2® 10 for z/OS®
- IBM CICS® Transaction Server
- IBM WebSphere® Application Server

Hardware

- IBM zEnterprise™ 196

Based in Helsinki, Finland, and employing about 6,000 people, Kela is Finland's primary social insurance institution. Its wide portfolio of benefits covers everything from pensions, disability, health insurance and rehabilitation to unemployment insurance, small-child care and family allowances, maternity grants, student benefits, general housing allowances, conscripts' allowances and special assistance for immigrants. In 2011, Kela delivered benefits valued at roughly EUR12.6 billion to about four million applicants. In an average year, the agency generates approximately 11 million points of contact with Finnish citizens through its online, phone-based and physical channels.

Challenge

Like most social service agencies, Kela faces the constant challenge of providing high levels of service to its constituents in a constrained resource environment. As Kela turned increasingly toward the online delivery of information and services, and customer quality expectations have continually risen, the agency recognized the need to steadily invest in improving the performance and efficiency of its service delivery infrastructure. An example of this commitment was its 2011 decision to upgrade the two IBM® System z® mainframes at the core of its infrastructure to a pair of IBM zEnterprise™ 196 mainframes running the IBM z/OS® environment.

To complement its investment while further improving its systems' performance and cost-effectiveness, Kela sought to upgrade its database processing capabilities. The agency's specific goals were to reduce overall CPU usage, improve response time and reduce storage requirements, which together would help the company more effectively execute its mission of serving citizens.

Solution

It had been a decade since the agency first selected IBM DB2® software, on the strength of its security, to store highly sensitive information, and Kela was a satisfied client. Kela saw the opportunity to

build on its success by upgrading its database platform to an IBM DB2 10 for z/OS solution. The upgrade project, executed almost entirely by Kela personnel, required just three months from installation to production. Kela uses the enhanced DB2 solution to support its existing distributed IBM WebSphere® Application Server software environments, which represent roughly one million daily transactions, as well as IBM CICS® Transaction Server software and batch-processing workloads, representing about nine million daily transactions.

As Kela continues to expand its base of distributed applications, it also wanted to gain a better understanding of how different segments of the transaction affected response time. This required the ability to monitor transactions from the customer level to the DB2 processing. To achieve this, Kela implemented the IBM Tivoli® OMEGAMON® XE for DB2 Performance Expert on z/OS tool. By using the Extended Insight Dashboard feature, Kela monitored how much of the overall processing time and workload were spent at the customer, network and database processing portions of the transaction. That visibility gave it the inside information it needed to optimize the execution parameters of different kinds of transactions.

Benefits

- Lowers CPU requirements by up to 15 percent, resulting in lower overall software costs
- Reduces storage consumption and associated hardware and software costs
- Enables Kela to develop new services faster because of enhanced support for XML functionality
- Increases IT staff productivity through automated tuning functionality

For more information

To learn more about IBM System z software, please contact your IBM marketing representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following website: **ibm.com**/software/systemz

"By improving the performance and efficiency of the Kela database processing capabilities, we're now better able to meet the growing demand for social services among our main constituency, the citizens of Finland."

—Jarmo Männikkö, database senior system programmer, Kela

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