

Risk analysis in a virtual network

IT French energy-trading company, Gaselys, uses grid computing solutions for daily CPU-intensive calculations.

> Hardly any other market worldwide is as volatile as the one for energy. Companies striving for success in this marketplace depend on timely and accurate information, and on an optimal IT infrastructure and high computing power capable of delivering that information. When trading with commodities like oil, gas and electricity, energy traders like the European Gaselys depend on

precise snapshots of their market position at any given time. Moreover, just like other investment companies, the subsidiary of Gaz de France (51% stake) and Société Générale (49% stake) must be able to comply with regulations and provide a range of key figures to authorities on demand. For these daily, complex and computation-intensive calculations, the joint venture has now introduced a grid computing solution.

With grid computing, the computing power of many machines can be consolidated in a virtual network. By distributing CPU-intensive tasks and working on them in parallel, they can be solved at much lower cost than with mainframe systems.

MAKING QUICK DEALS HAPPEN

With the help of the new system, Gaselys can calculate and close deals more quickly. The energy-trader uses the software solution Symphony from Platform Computing. It enables complex calculations in real-time and helps the company to realise competitive advantages on the trading floor.

In 2003, Gaselys discovered that grid computing held great potential for them. Symphony quickly became the software solution of choice. Gaselys implemented a server farm with 24/7 availability, which provides the trading offices with quick calculations during the day, and takes care of large-scale computing jobs during the night. Virtual computing grids distribute the workload and improve the utilisation of existing computing power. In addition, Symphony scales well with the dimension of the task at hand.

In case of peaks in the workload or changes in the requirements, the server farm can be easily extended to increase its computing power. This step does not require any action on application level. Symphony, according to the Canadian company, is a market-leading product capable of managing computing grids with thousands of CPUs.

PIONEERS OF SUCCESS

»Besides RWE Trading in Essen, Gaselys is one of the first energy-traders capitalising on the benefits of grid computing – and their success proves them right«, said Charlie Jarvis, vice president, European Financial Services, at Platform Computing.

»Our customers appreciate being able to adapt their calculations to their respective business requirements in real-time«, Jarvis said.

In addition to a considerably lower total cost of ownership, Gaselys will see noticeably higher performance. Thus, the company would be in a position to make faster and more precise decisions, Charlie Jarvis continued.

Philippe Vedrenne, General Manager of Gaselys, confirmed: »Exact risk analysis is a prerequisite for any transaction. After deploying the grid computing solution, we were suddenly able to compute tasks in real-time that used to run only once a day on one specific machine.«

In order to best utilise the capacities of its dual-core and blade servers in an optimal way, Gaselys, who rank among the largest providers on the European gas market, will continue to use Platform Symphony in its most current versions. <

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