

Century-National Insurance Uses Verastream Host Integrator for B2B Solution

HP-based applications are web-enabled for brokers and agents



Century-National is a California-based insurance company serving more than 250,000 individual policy holders for personal property, auto, and commercial vehicles. They also provide insurance for mortgage lenders, banks, credit unions, and other financial institutions in the western U.S. Company revenues in the past year included more than \$100 million in homeowner policies and \$56 million in commercial auto policies.

The Opportunistic IT Mindset

When Lou Balicki, vice president of information systems for Century-National, attended a recent Gartner conference, he wasn't expecting to encounter a solution with so many legacy integration possibilities. But when he saw a demonstration of Attachmate® Verastream® Host Integrator, he said, "holy mackerel, that could solve at least a dozen different problems in my IT environment."

Verastream Host Integrator encapsulates legacy data and logic via the screen interface. It transforms host applications into SOA assets by exposing business processes as web services, XML, Java, or .NET components that can be mixed, matched, and reused.

A B2B Imperative

For Century-National, providing accurate, real-time information to their agents and brokers is key to success. Balicki immediately saw that, with Verastream, the company could make the critical applications residing on their HP e3000 available for easy web access by their business partners. Furthermore, he realized that service-enabling these legacy investments would take his SOA strategy to the next level.

A subsequent proof of concept by Attachmate convinced Balicki and software development manager Saro Hamamah that Verastream was the right tool for the job. "The Attachmate engineers showed us how Verastream could work with our HP and even our DOS applications," Hamamah said. "They were very capable."

"But that's not all," he added. "We saw that this technology is extremely capable too. It works as well with our HP midrange as it does with our Microsoft and Novell servers."

QUICK VIEW

Problem

Business partners needed real-time access to information residing on HP e3000 application.

Solution

Used Verastream to service-enable host data and business logic, providing a customized web application for brokers and agents.

Results

- Immediate validation of profiles and risk, for instant policy issuance.
- No need to replicate data or programming.
- Ability to leverage investment in HP e3000.
- Advancement of enterprise SOA strategy.
- Rapid application development platform in place for ongoing projects.

Web-Enablement, Made Easy

The Century-National IT team began by designing a web site for external agents to process homeowners insurance. With Verastream, developers were able to extract data and functions from the company's HP-based applications as reusable services. They then used those services to build the new web site.

Agents now access Century-National's domain via the company's SSL appliance and land on the user-friendly web application feeding directly into the transactional system on the HP server. The online front end lets them collect applicant information, validate property profiles, assess risk, provide quotes, and issue policies. Without paperwork. Without rekeying. Without errors.

Even policy numbers are automatically retrieved and returned to the third-party users, without manual procedures. Agents see only a simple web interface while Verastream Host Integrator performs the complex operations in concert with the HP policy-administration system behind the scenes.

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– Lou Balicki
Vice President of
Information Systems
Century-National
Insurance Company

No Replication, No Re-engineering

Verastream also has eliminated the need to replicate a variety of insurance data and functions. For example, any rate change would ordinarily require individual adjustments to the rating tables on the HP application, in addition to other systems where that data resides, including the web site.

Century-National could have rewritten the rating-table modules and replicated them across the enterprise, but that would have taken too long. It also would have incurred download and upload expenses. Instead, Verastream Host Integrator has automated the process, executing rate changes quickly and thoroughly – enterprisewide – while reducing IT maintenance work. “The bottom line for us is that all of these capabilities make

it easier for our partners to do business with us,” Balicki said.

And brokers aren’t the only user group that’s happy with the new web application. “The new system got huge praise from our homeowners insurance underwriting department,” reported Hamamah. “This is a group that is very familiar with the HP e3000 for their internal processing and they really appreciated the user friendliness of the new web app.”

Recycling Yields Fast Results

Once services have been generated with Verastream, IT organizations can use them as building blocks for ongoing business initiatives. Now that Century-National has web-enabled their policy administration for homeowners insurance, they are looking to do the same for other applications with client/server front ends, such as their standalone fire and earthquake, personal auto, collateral protection, and mobile home policies. Balicki said that the IT team is also eyeing Verastream to enhance the company’s HP-based policy endorsement processes.

“The beauty of Verastream is that it’s noninvasive; you don’t have to modify the legacy system,” said Balicki. “In the insurance industry we

can’t afford to risk the integrity of our critical legacy data.”

Single-Vendor Host Solutions, Based on Customer Satisfaction

Balicki said there are few software vendors with Attachmate’s commitment to excellent customer service: “If we can’t resolve a problem easily, Attachmate is there for us right away, and that’s how business should be done.”

This level of service actually comes as no surprise to Balicki, though. He reported that Century-National has been using Attachmate terminal emulation products since he started working with the company some 20 years ago (“when we got rid of those Hazeltine 1520 terminals”). Century-National uses Reflection® for HP to connect Windows users to their HP host as well as Reflection® for the Web to provide secure browser-based host connectivity.

As a satisfied Attachmate customer, Balicki said standardizing on Reflection products has had many benefits, including easy administration and troubleshooting. He added, “Reflection might be more expensive, but it’s worth every penny in reliability and up-to-date features.”

Although Century-National has plans for eventual phase-out of their HP e3000, Balicki said the company is determined to leverage its rich stores of data and business logic for at least five years. “Verastream and Reflection are helping us get the most out of that legacy host investment as we plan for the future,” he said.

About Attachmate

Attachmate helps businesses extend, manage, and secure their IT investments. We offer a broad range of solutions—from terminal emulation and legacy integration products to innovative systems and security management tools. With our technology, more than 65,000 customers worldwide are putting their IT assets to work in new and meaningful ways. Learn more at www.attachmate.com.



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