

SUCCESS STORY

Fidelity ensures continuity for their data center with CHARON-VAX



The Challenge

As a leading provider of technology services to the financial sector, and one of the largest title insurance companies in the US, Fidelity prides itself on having the most innovative technologies. Its system relied heavily on about 60 VAXes used for production, as well as several others used for development. Three years after HP officially retired the VAX, it became clear that these VAX systems would have to be replaced, as the risk of hardware failure was growing by the day, and parts were becoming scarce.

Fidelity's IT department started looking for a solution that would solve their maintenance problems, increase the system's storage and expansion capacity, and decrease its footprint. They first approached HP about migrating to the Alpha platform. After assessing their existing system, however, they determined that this would necessitate re-writing or re-compiling approximately seven million lines of code, written over a period of 20 years. Though not impossible, that would be an exceptionally expensive, risky, and time-consuming process. The business-critical systems involved were essential to Fidelity's day-to-day operations. A more efficient alternative was needed.

The Solution

When researching the options online, Steve Olson, Fidelity's VMS systems manager, discovered the CHARON-VAX cross-platform virtualization software developed by Stromasys. It sounded like the perfect solution, as it allowed applications and operating systems made for one type of hardware to run seamlessly on a different platform, without modification. Olson contacted Stromasys to find out more. Although the technology sounded almost too good to be true, after learning more about it, he was convinced that it was worth a try. Fidelity started by replacing a VAX 4705A with an HP ProLiant ML370 server running CHARON-VAX. According to Olson, "There was a slight learning curve at first to get used to the configuration and how the devices are set up, but we haven't had any problems with the software. Now it's so easy: when we want to replace a VAX with the CHARON-VAX software, we order a key and install it ourselves." After the success of the first installation, Fidelity quickly set about replacing as many of the remaining VAXes as possible.



CUSTOMER PROFILE

Fidelity National Financial Inc. (FNF) is a leading provider of title insurance, specialty insurance, and claims management services. The company includes Fidelity National Title Group and Fidelity National Property and Casualty Insurance Group as well as Sedgwick CMS and Ceridian, two minority-owned subsidiaries of FNF.

Fidelity National Title Group, Inc. (FNTG) is one of the nation's largest title insurance companies through its title insurance underwriters (Fidelity National Title Insurance Company, Chicago Title Insurance Company, Tigor Title Insurance, Commonwealth Land Title Insurance Company, Lawyers Title Insurance Corporation, Security Union Title Insurance Company, and Alamo Title Insurance). Fidelity National Property and Casualty Insurance Group is a nationwide provider of a broad range of personal insurance products, including homeowner's, flood, auto, and umbrella insurance coverage. Sedgwick CMS is the leading North American provider of innovative claims and productivity management solutions. Ceridian Corporation, a minority-owned subsidiary of FNF, is a leading information services company in the human resources, retail, and transportation markets.



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They now have about 35 virtual VAX systems running on a variety of Charon products, including CHARON-VAX XM, XM Plus, XL Plus, and CHARON-VAX 6630 Plus for Windows. They have upgraded most of their HP ProLiant ML370 replacement servers to smaller, more energy-efficient ProLiant DL380/DL385 servers.

The Result

The CHARON-VAX software enabled Fidelity to meet their goals of reducing hardware failure risk and increasing storage capacity. Olson was delighted with the amount of space and energy saved, as well as the improved look of the data center: "Space is a big commodity. Using CHARON-VAX, we went from refrigerator-sized VAX hardware that also required a refrigerator-sized array, to a modern, rackable HP DL 2U server. And you can just imagine the savings from lower energy consumption and cooling costs."

Fidelity also gained a performance increase. The IT team was amazed at how fast the applications ran on the Charon platform. Olson says: "One example of the speed boost Charon gave our application was seen during the cutover process. We noticed our batch architecture subsystem began to skip random records as it was writing them out to a file to process. The record key was based on a time stamp, and went to the hundredth of a second. Charon was so fast that it was trying to write multiple records within the same hundredth of a second. A simple timing adjustment fixed the problem, but that really helped demonstrate the big increase in speed that Charon gave us."

About Stromasys

Stromasys is the original and leading provider of enterprise-class cross-platform virtualization solutions, including PDP-11, Digital VAX and Alpha, HP 3000, and SPARC servers. The company extends the life cycle of business and mission-critical systems through virtualization, modernization, and system enhancement.

Founded in 1998 and headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, and in Boston, Massachusetts, with sales offices as well as engineering, development, and research labs located around the world, Stromasys has implemented more than 5,000 cross-platform virtualization solutions for the world's leading companies in over 50 countries.

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Steve Olson,

VMS systems manager,
Fidelity National Financial

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