



Case Study: MChex

Unprecedented scalability for Oracle9i RAC

Business Value

- TCO a fraction of UNIX
- Server provisioning in minutes
- "Five nines" uptime
- 200 transactions per second

Executive Summary

This U.K.-based provider of mobile solutions needed a mix of robust computing power and flexible processing capacity to meet unpredictable demands for its consumer services. The Egenera® BladeFrame® system provides the scalability to meet peak demands coupled with exceptional availability and performance.

Business Challenge

MChex's business relies on its ability to rapidly deliver mobile solutions which address specific customer requirements. Because of the consumer-led nature of the services it offers, the transaction volumes handled by MChex systems are very unpredictable, with bursts of activity and high transaction peaks. This demands a proven mix of robust computing power and flexible processing capacity not available from traditional big-box servers.

According to MChex CTO Steven Atkinson, "Traditional server architectures were simply too inflexible for our needs and our customers' needs. Many of our services are consumer-led and can generate huge transaction volumes very quickly. This means our hardware and processing platforms have to scale rapidly to suit the application with minimal management.

"We simply cannot afford the cost, management and downtime implications of commissioning new, individual servers to handle high numbers of transactions. Equally, we have to have the processing headroom to handle high traffic volumes and keep services running smoothly—but without the extra costs of redundant hardware."

As a result, Atkinson and his team evaluated blade server options. MChex chose the Egenera BladeFrame system, which was deployed by technology integrator Morse in early 2003.

"We found that the BladeFrame offers a better price/performance ratio and is more mature than other solutions on the market," Atkinson noted. "Also, Egenera's track record is impressive."

The Solution

The BladeFrame is populated with seven two-way Egenera Processing Blade™ modules running Intel® Xeon™ processors, the Red Hat® Linux® operating system and MChex's transaction-processing and billing applications, which are linked to an Oracle9i RAC database. Disk storage for the database and applications is provided by NetApps filer.

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Steven Atkinson
Chief Technology Officer
MChex

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Running Oracle on Linux and Intel delivers exceptional business agility, driving down total cost of ownership to a fraction of proprietary UNIX systems. A pre-integrated, highly scalable platform, the BladeFrame enables datacenter managers to deliver the benefits of Oracle9i RAC without operational complexity.

Atkinson reports that implementation and commissioning went smoothly and points out a key benefit of the BladeFrame: its PAN Manager™ software. "If we need to bring an extra server online to cope with a burst of transactions, we can do so in a matter of minutes from the Egenera management console. We can allocate and manage resources dynamically to suit our immediate needs, with zero application downtime."

Atkinson concluded, "With the BladeFrame supporting our applications, we are getting close to five nines (99.999%) uptime and processing capacity of more than 200 transactions per second. This provides the performance and robustness we need to support the peaks and troughs of transaction processing, and gives MChex the ideal platform on which to deploy truly advanced, consumer mobile-payment solutions."

About MChex

MChex is a fast-growing company that is set to become a market leader in secure transaction handling and revenue-generating mechanisms for both corporate and consumer mobile applications. MChex has developed its own core applications and robust infrastructure to form a carrier-class system delivering a range of mobile services. Current services use reverse-billed SMS text messaging which works across the five major U.K. mobile providers. MChex offers both premium rate and wholesale services which are handset- and operator-agnostic.



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