

Canal+ Group web-enables 3270 screens with Verastream Host Integrator

Customer relations center can respond more quickly and provide better service



QUICK VIEW

Problem

The need for rapid integration of risk-free emulation in Siebel version 7.8.

Solution

Used Verastream Host Integrator to turn 3270 screens into web applications.

Results

- Solution rolled out in six weeks.
- A more efficient, more profitable call center.
- An SOA development platform in place for ongoing projects.

Canal+ Group is the leading producer of pay-TV channels in France. The company's offerings, available on all broadcasting platforms, reach more than one in four French households. At the end of 2005, the Canal+ Group portfolio totaled 8 million subscriptions and sales of € 3.452 billion.

In order to restructure its subscriber-management information system for better efficiencies, the company was migrating from thick-client to thin-client emulation. That meant they needed to web-enable a series of 3270 host screens and allow for quick integration of its Siebel system.

“As well as appreciating the quality of Verastream, we were impressed by the way Attachmate optimized and focused their proposed solution for our project. The impartial feedback that we received from other Verastream users was also extremely helpful.”

– Pierre Gressier
Director of Information Services
Canal+ Group

Maximum Power/Performance Ratio Required

IT Project Director Daniel Delgado knew the change had to be made without impact to the company's call center. “Our CRM structure was fully operational, so we needed to ensure a risk-free environment for the impending transition,” he said.

The IT staff at Canal+ committed to an aggressive schedule: only five months between the bid request and the start of production. And they were determined to implement the new solution without compromising quality.

“Well aware that the new architecture could affect performance in the contact center, we insisted on shorter response times regardless of the type of screen used by the operator,” Delgado said. “Our objective was to implement a solution with the power to support activity peaks ranging from 800 to 1,000 simultaneous users, based on an average of 40,000 to more than 100,000 calls per day.”

A Rigorous Selection Process

To select a candidate, Canal+ conducted a battery of tests. The proof of concept involved a computerized robot that could measure technical and functional performance as well as increases in power and response times. "This approach let us stress the system without stressing the mainframe, which continued its regular service during this period," said Delgado.

"Our questions were sometimes specialized. But Attachmate's answers were always pertinent, and work carried out jointly with the Canal+ Group teams was efficient."

- Daniel Delgado,
IT Project Director
Canal+ Group

"Attachmate proved fully able to support the simulation," he reported. "We noticed in particular that Verastream was not deterred by our standard 'test bottleneck' that was a significant hurdle for other vendors."

Tests were carried out in stages involving configurations of 200, 400, 600, and finally 800 users during periods lasting between a half hour and two hours - then in a continuous simulation lasting an entire night, with comprehensive analysis of the reports provided by the robot.

Attachmate: Rising to the Challenge

Attachmate showed the breadth of their expertise by scoping the project to include mainframes, servers, and development issues, according to Delgado. They also provided decision-making help and support measures, to ensure that no transaction parameter would be overlooked. To complete

the evaluation process, Attachmate recommended three distinct phases: a feasibility study, a test model, and then actual tests on production servers.

Having begun at the end of March, the tests led to the decision, in the last week of June, to select the Attachmate Verastream integration suite. With production started in July and deployed system-wide by August, Canal+ easily met their established time horizon.

Tough Criteria Benefit Canal+ in the Long Run

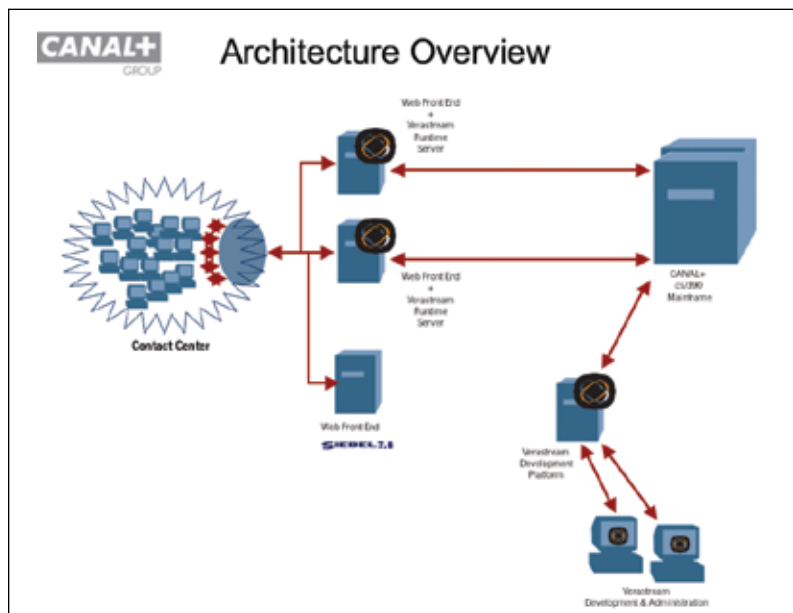
"Given our ambitions regarding customer-relations management, we were very tough on and very demanding of our potential vendors," Delgado said. "But thanks to those rigorous requirements, we can now, after four months of intensive Verastream use, feel confident about our end-of-year peaks in activity."

He added that price was another important criterion leading Canal+ toward the ultimate selection of Verastream. Moreover, he said, "we observed how willing Attachmate was to keep adjusting their proposal parameters with each stage of the assessment of our situation."

The Verastream Advantage

Verastream Host Integrator encapsulates mainframe data and logic via the screen interface, without changing mainframe-application code. It exposes business processes as web services, XML, Java, or .NET components that can be mixed, matched, and reused.

Because Verastream uses an SOA approach, which features progressive integration of individual task-based services, it has the ability to handle ongoing changes. That means any Canal+ Group call-center operator can get real-time access to all aspects of a subscriber's profile, including associated contracts or options. With all the integrated data available in one easy-to-use interface, the operator can link customers up with any new offers while also achieving the best value for the company.



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