

WebSphere software

Progressive enhances wireless capabilities with new IBM architecture



Overview

■ **The Challenge**

Progressive needed to update the company's platform to support its laptop-to-mainframe architecture, as well as 'future proof' its application base to support new hardware, software and wireless requirements

■ **The Solution**

IBM WebSphere® Everyplace Connection Manager, IBM WebSphere MQ Everyplace

■ **The Benefits**

Introduces support for new wireless technologies, offers flexible, open standards base for future growth and applications, enables seamless fail-over capability, simplifies system support

On-the-spot customer service gets results

In business since 1937, the Progressive (www.progressive.com) group of companies ranks third in the nation for auto insurance, serving more than 11 million drivers. Based near Cleveland, Ohio, the company is known throughout the industry as one that uses the latest technology and innovation to improve the experience of its customers.

Progressive set a new standard for customer service with the introduction of its in-person, 24x7 Progressive claims service. The company's claims representatives drive a fleet of Immediate Response Vehicles, arriving at the scene of an accident or traveling to wherever a customer may need them, in order to handle a claim from start to finish.

In 2002, Progressive's revenues rose 24 percent to \$9.3 billion, and net income rose 62 percent.

Progressive Claims Service

Progressive Insurance's Claims Workbench application is a critical element in the company's claims strategy, and is installed on over 5,000 laptops in the field. A wireless data network transmits data between Progressive's mainframe computer and the claims representatives. The Claims Workbench client application gives the representatives the ability to make informed decisions regarding the fast, accurate settlement of each claim. The network, which uses LAN, dial-up, cellular and wireless connections typically handles over 260,000 transactions a week, with around 1,500 concurrent users online.

Keeping up with technology

The old middleware platform was unable to keep up with wireless technology. An open, scalable, more streamlined platform was needed

to support Progressive's laptop-to-mainframe architecture. In addition, the company wanted to "future proof" its application base, enabling them to plug in new hardware, software and wireless protocol support as needed.

IBM provides wireless-enabled solution

Progressive's Claims Workbench is now wireless-enabled with IBM WebSphere Everyplace Connection Manager and IBM WebSphere MQ Everyplace. The new platform, supported by a cluster of IBM @server pSeries™ servers and an IBM @server zSeries™ processor, allows Progressive to introduce support for new wireless technologies in a way that is transparent to users, while offering a flexible, open standards base for future growth and applications.

Expected benefits and future plans

Through the use of IBM WebSphere MQ Everyplace and WebSphere technology, the company hopes to improve customer service, reduce cycle time, and lower its cost of doing business. The open platform makes changes in underlying wireless protocols easier to implement, insulating the company from the rapid evolution of technology in this area.

By adding support in multiple data centers, removing single points of failure, and replacing an outdated technology with a better one, Progressive gained a seamless fail-over capability that was not there before. Since data no longer have to be maintained on the server, the system is more scalable and ready to handle the expected growth in transactions. The new architecture has a simpler design, with fewer paths and potential failure points. System support has been simplified.

The addition of IBM WebSphere Everyplace Connection Manager and WebSphere MQ Everyplace has had almost no impact on user training. No matter how they connect, clients use the same familiar application interface.

Progressive is now ready for the new wireless world of the future. The Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) interface will make it easier to plug in new protocols beneath new and existing IP applications.

For more information

For more information on IBM pervasive computing solutions, visit ibm.com/pvc or contact your local IBM representative.



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