Case Study

Aareon AG

Smooth and transparent system migration

Aareon AG is an international consulting company and system provider for the real estate industry. In mid-2005, Aareon enabled 20,000 client computers of their customers to access central applications deployed through their own IBM mainframe in Mainz, using the Esker Tun Plus Host Access solution.

This case demonstrates clearly that terminal emulation solutions will remain indispensable companions in the foreseeable future for accessing host systems throughout many industries. However, these industries require state-of-the-art access solutions allowing for seamless integration with or supporting migration to new environments.

CONFIGURATION

- **Server:** IBM Mainframe
- **Application:** Housing Industry / Real Estate Applications

"Tun Plus allowed us to seamlessly replace our existing Host Access solution, which was not future-proof and no longer met our requirements in terms of maintenance and price/performance ratio."

– Ulrich Tokarski,
Team Manager IT-Services, Aareon AG

" Since Aareon has highly special requirements, we very much appreciated the fact that Tun Plus uses only established standards and provides a large number of interfaces."

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THE SITUATION

Mainframe Environments: Still a lot of them out there

Market studies have revealed that today, approx. 70% of business-critical data is still stored on mainframes. The motivations behind this extraordinary rate have not changed: low administration costs for users and systems, reliability, high availability, and easy scalability.

In the case of Aareon, the decision to prolong their use of a Host Access solution for years to come is based on the fact that many business processes at Aareon are modeled in and mapped to mainframe applications.

Centralised Applications for 20.000 Clients on IBM Mainframes

Approximately 1,600 customers use GES, Aareon's mainframe-based ERP solution for the housing industry. These customers include co-ops, private as well as municipal housing companies, property management services, or even property funds. A total of 20,000 installations are connected to the IBM mainframe in Mainz using terminal emulation via leased lines or Wide Area Networks (WANs). This approach guarantees quick and secure access to centralised applications ranging from finance accounting via property management and construction engineering to complex real estate management, and effective support of corporate management. Ulrich Tokarski, Team Manager at Aareon, gives a typical example: *"If a clerk or assistant has been assigned the task of drafting a lease agreement, he or she simply accesses the corresponding mainframe tool via terminal emulation."*

THE REQUIREMENTS

Focus on Security

Centralised mainframe servers must be reliably protected against unauthorised access. Therefore, security requirements for Host Access solutions are high. The terminal emulation feature of Tun Plus provides Aareon with high-level encryption based on the SSL 3.0 (Secure Sockets Layer) standard, SSH (Secure Shell) authentication using public keys and digital certificates, as well as user identification via Directory Services.

Esker SOFTWARE

"Tun Plus allowed us to seamlessly replace our existing Host Access solution"

— Ulrich Tokarski, Teamleiter, Aareon AG

"he main reason for continuing to use a Host Access solution was that many of our business processes are mapped to mainframe applications."

– Ulrich Tokarski,
Team Manager IT-Services, Aareon AG

Individual Requirements

In addition, Aareon's requirements were highly special and by far exceeded the capabilities of "out-of-the-box" Host Access solutions. The company needed an extensible, scalable, and customisable solution. Therefore, Aareon very much appreciated the fact that Tun Plus uses only established standards and provides a large number of interfaces.

THE SOLUTION

Replacement of existing Host Access Solution leads to Maintenance Benefits

Since mid-2005, Aareon has been using the Tun Plus software as a Host Access solution. Terminal emulation is provided by the Tun Emul module. The balance was tipped in favor of Tun Plus mainly because it enabled Aareon to seamlessly replace the existing Host Access solution, which was not future-proof and no longer met the requirements in terms of maintenance and price/performance ratio.

After extensive market research and test installations in the fall of 2004, Aareon's IT specialists cast their final vote in favor of the Esker Tun Plus Host Access solution. This state-of-the-art solution enables Aareon to provide its customers with host access both from Windows®-based PCs as well as through terminal servers.

THE ADVANTAGE

Seamless System Integration

The migration went so smoothly that the users themselves never took notice of the product change. Given the large user base across many companies, Aaron issues regular update rollouts by providing new software versions on CD-ROM. *"PC users will not recognise that they are working with a new Host Access product unless they have a closer look at the startup screen,"* says Ulrich Tokarski avidly.

About Aareon

Aareon AG is a wholly owned subsidiary of Aareal Bank AG and the leading consulting and system provider for the real estate industry in Europe. Aareon's portfolio comprises solutions for all major aspects in the management of residential and industrial real estate, including consulting, software, services, and support. A customer base of 50,000 users across Europe uses Aareon's solutions for the management of approx. 8 million apartments, and industrial facilities. Aareon has subsidiaries in 20 European locations, including 12 offices in Germany. At present, the business activities of Aareon AG extend far beyond their original German home market to France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Poland, and Switzerland.

20 percent of Aareon's 1,100 employees work outside of Germany. In 2004, the company generated a turnover of 159.7 million Euros.

Esker® SOFTWARE

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