

First American Real Estate Solutions Addresses Rapid Growth and Data Expansion with PRIMEPOWER Server Solutions from Fujitsu

Fujitsu offers worldwide IT infrastructure solutions that encompass a range of technology solutions and fully customized managed services. With expertise in enterprise open systems server and storage solutions, Fujitsu focuses on delivering high availability, mission-critical, scalable solutions in the large-systems marketplace.

Customer Profile:

First American Real Estate Solutions has chosen PRIMEPOWER™ server solutions to drive a massive Oracle® database and improve its data center performance and reliability to support an aggressive corporate growth strategy.

First American Real Estate Solutions (RES®) is the nation's largest provider of advanced property and ownership information and applications covering over 1,500 counties and more than 500,000 users nationwide. First American RES is a member of The First American Family of Companies, a Fortune 500 company recognized as the third-best performer for long term earnings growth by Fortune Magazine. First American RES has a significant need for highly reliable and scalable server solutions wrapped into a cost-effective environment to help drive the company's proprietary line of real estate information delivery tools.

As part of The First American Corporation, this specific division handles the company's property information database systems, services and products. Customers of First American RES depend on the company to improve customer acquisition and retention, detect and prevent fraud, improve mortgage transaction cycle time and cost efficiency, measure the value of residential and commercial properties, identify real estate trends and neighborhood characteristics, track market performance, and increase market share. With data collection on 100 million properties annually and 4 million property and mortgage transactions each month, First American RES coverage extends to over 92 percent of real estate transactions in the United States.



First American RES administers one of the nation's largest accessible Oracle databases—with over two terabytes of data—powered by PRIMEPOWER servers. The Oracle database holds information on county Recorder and Assessor records, allowing customers to access comparable real estate information such as property sales figures and property valuations, household demographics, local school and crime record information, flood data, appraisal data, and other proprietary and supplemental information on real estate property across the entire United States.

For example, all real estate numbers provided and delivered through Yahoo.com are delivered via First American RES. Customers' business, and in turn company revenue is dependent upon reliable and continuously available data in a continuous 24/7/365 environment.

Problem

First American RES was tasked with supporting an aggressive acquisition strategy to expand the business by a factor of four over the next several years. "In order to accomplish our growth, we needed a scalable system backed by quality service and support, all of which we have found in Fujitsu," said Evan Jafa, chief technology officer for First American RES. As a result of the rapid growth, the company needed to solve two primary IT issues.

First, the company needed to quickly and accurately integrate and effectively manage large amounts of data. They also had to handle more intensive internal computing demands. In order to accomplish these tasks, First American RES required a very scalable and reliable enterprise platform that could accommodate the growth of the business.

Second, First American RES had to decide whether or not to keep the existing Solaris™ operating system, an environment in which the company had already invested heavily. At the same time, they were seeking increased performance from their data center servers.

Solution

Fujitsu® teamed with First American RES to provide a high-end PRIMEPOWER 800 and 1000 Solaris server solution that enables the company to scale to support multiple new products and high transaction volumes. The company chose the technology from Fujitsu for two business critical purposes: to manage the logic and business rules of the company's business applications and to drive the massive Oracle database itself.

First American RES chose the Solaris/Oracle combination and the expertise from Fujitsu with this configuration to optimally handle the high transaction, non-static data environment of the company. The high-powered system and support enable customers to access information extremely quickly from the company's databases. First American RES had considered using other flavors of UNIX® than Solaris, but they did not want to endure a year-long effort of transitioning their software, solutions, and processes. Jafa needed a system that was capable of handling high transaction volumes that was continuously available and which also allowed the company to stay a Solaris shop. Fujitsu has provided the CTO with a tremendously flexible, highly reliable choice in the high-end server marketplace.

The servers from Fujitsu ultimately drive First American RES business through its data center.

Each night, First American RES takes a delta of all the real estate data from the previous day, and copies it to the Presentation System. The Presentation System is a UNIX/Oracle environment in which PRIMEPOWER servers process data from a massive Oracle database and deliver the information to First American RES' proprietary Web-based and client/server product lines.

"The main reason we selected Fujitsu is because they addressed the data housing and delivery problems we were trying to solve," said Jafa. "In our business, quick and accurate information is key, and no interruption equals greater revenue. Fujitsu gave us an extremely advantageous, cost-effective solution and data availability that is critical to the success and growth of our company."

First American RES delivers multiple product lines, disseminating various kinds of real estate data powered by PRIMEPOWER servers. Those products include:

- RealQuest®.com – Web-based solution that links lenders and appraisers to automated valuation models (AVM), legal and vesting reports, property profiles, parcel maps, recorded documents, and more.
- LeadsToLoans®.com – Web-based solution allows users to select and download targeted prospects for mortgage broker, lender, and title company marketing programs.
- Realist®.com – Connects First American RES enriched public record information and robust interface with Web-enabled MLS systems to deliver the most up-to-date information including property profiles, farming lists, competitive market analysis, AVMs, document images, transaction history, and more.
- Connect2Data™XML – Helps clients integrate property and ownership information such as document images, AVMs, and assessor maps directly into operational systems or products, and includes a wide variety of developer tools.
- Marketrac® – Combines flexible query software with a database of publicly recorded mortgage information to enable market share tracking and sales channel management for lenders and title companies.
- Win2Data®, MetroScan®, and PaceNet® – Deliver the most comprehensive database of property owner names, sales transactions, property characteristics, and tax assessor maps to the desktop through a Windows® interface.
- ValuePoint®4 – A 4th-generation AVM that uses multiple valuation methods and proprietary information to supplement public records as a means to provide the largest coverage area, highest accuracy, and most reliable AVM in the nation.

According to Jafa, the tremendous market traction for these products and the resulting revenues have been in large part driven by technology enabled by PRIMEPOWER servers and the Oracle database. Using the architecture from Fujitsu, the company has been able to better integrate applications and products to accommodate 150 percent growth in revenues.

“Since our migration to Fujitsu servers, we have confirmed that we selected the right technology, and we know we chose the right team to service that technology,” said Jafa. “We want our partners to act like part of our internal team — that’s the kind of service we expect and that’s the kind of service Fujitsu provides.”





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