Swiss Re

Swiss Re focuses on end-user experience as part of a wider Digital Transformation and Workplace Strategy

Aternity™

Swiss Re

Challenges

- Improve application performance
- Provide end-to-end visibility across the digital experience
- Produce metrics for performance baselines

Solution

- Aternity End User Experience Monitoring

Benefits

- End-to-end monitoring
- Single view of applications in 80 locations
- Helps monitor performance improvements
- Empowers users to demand performance service levels

The Swiss Re Group is one of the world's leading providers of reinsurance, insurance and other forms of insurance-based risk transfer, working to make the world more resilient. It anticipates and manages risk – from natural catastrophes to climate change, from ageing populations to cyber crime. The aim of the Swiss Re Group is to enable society to thrive and progress, creating new opportunities and solutions for its clients. Headquartered in Zurich, Switzerland, where it was founded in 1863, the Swiss Re Group operates through a network of around 80 offices globally.

It is organized into three business units, each with a distinct strategy and set of objectives contributing to the group's overall mission.

Challenge: understanding the IT experience

Underpinning this is a strategy of digital transformation. It aims to make the staff more effective, and simplify collaboration between global teams and between Swiss Re and its external partners and customers. "We're taking IT out of the back office and using it to create new value propositions for the business. This transformation has been highly visible and is supported by senior management," says Ron Kwong, Head of Delivery Assurance, Digital Workplace at Swiss Re.

This is as much a push from the IT team, as a pull from their internal customers. "We have a lot of IT-savvy users within the organization and they expect more from IT. They spend a lot of their day on Outlook or on Skype and they rely on them to communicate with each other and with external parties. So our focus has shifted from 'who is using IT services?', to 'how are they experiencing IT?'."

Employees and users of IT services within Swiss Re work across a range of devices: employees have company-issued notebooks, there is access to a virtual workplace from personal computers, and iOS and Android users can 'Bring Your Own Device' (BYOD) meaning they can also connect their own devices.

"We see the Digital Workplace becoming increasingly mobile over the next 18 months. For us the Digital Workplace includes all the Microsoft Office 365 applications and access to business applications," says Kwong. "We want our employees to have the flexibility to work from anywhere, with access to the right tools and data. We want to encourage collaboration and not prescribe one set way of working."

For this to happen, the business needed to understand exactly how its main Windows, Office and business applications were performing across large-scale environments.

In the past, the IT team relied on users letting them know when they encountered glitches. A quantifiable means of monitoring performance was essential in order to anticipate potential issues and create performance benchmarks.

"We also wanted to be more scientific in how we approached the user experience," explains Joost Smit, Digital Workplace Solution Architect and Engineer at Swiss Re. "We realized our existing device performance monitoring tool couldn't tell us what our workforce was actually experiencing, because it simply didn't measure most of it. Plus, it was hard to interpret and didn't scale.

"This issue is becoming increasingly important as new versions of Windows, Office and other applications now update very frequently. We need to know how these changes are impacting our end-users."

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> **JOOST SMIT** Digital Workplace Solution Architect and Engineer, Swiss Re

Solution: intelligent data insights

With the incumbent monitoring tool up for renewal, the team began assessing the options. Aternity was identified as a suitable candidate. A positive response to an initial Proof of Concept led to a wider test across 1,500 devices worldwide, involving users from engineering and customer-facing teams along with application owners (both Windows-based and home-grown applications).

"All our internal stakeholders in the initial phase were happy," says Smit. "We had a good variety of users, which enabled us to compare the different experiences of users on Windows 7 and Windows 10, for example."

Aternity ensures the end-user experience is monitored across the enterprise, running on any physical, virtual, or mobile device. It provides immediate insight into how application performance affects productivity.

By analyzing application usage, time spent running in the foreground, active time, wait time, and crashes, it instantaneously assesses how long Swiss Re users wait for every business-critical application in the entire enterprise portfolio.

"Aternity automatically generates a baseline for every application, device and user performance metric collected. Baselines can automatically be split, by location, subnet or target server, so that a granular baseline exists for different groups of users. In addition, Aternity isolates the source of delay to the client device, network, or application back-end, to reduce finger-pointing and speed up Mean Time to Repair.

"What we particularly liked with Aternity was the ease in which we could analyze and correlate data," says Smit. Aternity makes this insight easily available to a broader audience, in a format that is scalable and sharable with our internal stakeholders."

Benefits: visibility and efficiency gains

Benefits: Visibility and efficiency gains "Now with Aternity, we can measure actual end-user experience, remotely, proactively, and non-invasively," says Smit. "Which is especially important because the business cannot afford any interruption into the productivity of the workforce."

From a trouble-shooting perspective, Smit says Aternity removes siloes and closes gaps in visibility: "Having facts and accurate insight, rather than relying on anecdotal feedback is hugely beneficial." Insights that used to take days to extract, were prone to human error and quickly outdated, can now be viewed in real-time.

"The combination of the efficiency of Aternity coupled with no longer having to manually crunch data to find information, meant the deployment has paid for itself," Smit adds.

Smit would like to create training material based on Aternity findings, for application owners to optimize their users' experience.

For instance, three offices in the US were included in the test phase. There had been performance issues reported by several users. By using Aternity, the team was able to reconcile what was happening compared to what was being reported. "It turns out there wasn't anything technically wrong," says Smit. "Instead it highlighted there was an on-boarding issue whereby users needed more support and guidance on how to use certain tools.

"We have a highly complex IT landscape and Aternity will allow us to create baselines at a granular level for different applications, locations and devices." These baselines will then help benchmark performance for different territories, products, or remote teams.

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Encouraging freedom of choice in a digital workplace

Longer term, the benefit of Aternity goes beyond troubleshooting. Kwong says insight into the end-user experience will help inform future IT investment and deployment, an increasingly significant detail as the modern IT moves to an 'as-a-Service' model. Microsoft Office 365 and Windows 10 are planned to roll-out globally this year; one of Swiss Re's more complex setups. Kwong says Aternity will be invaluable in testing, reviewing and extending proposed fixes.

"Aternity has delivered value straight out of the box, with no need for customization. It allows us to be more proactive in how we deploy new services. For instance, we can see how email is being used by a certain team. We've never had access to these kind of metrics before. This could help us understand what new communication tools are needed, and we can then monitor how they're adopted in a smaller test environment before making wider plans."

All of this plays into the broader strategy of allowing users the freedom to choose the tools and devices they need to do their job in a digital workplace. Kwong concludes, "We don't want to tell people what tools they must use, but we do want to understand how the tools they choose are performing."

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Aternity, the leader in Digital Experience Management, transforms the employee experience in the digital workplace, with enterprise-scale analytics for every application, all transactions, any device, and all users. Aternity's AI-powered visibility and self-healing control help IT optimize business application performance to improve employee productivity and customer satisfaction, mitigate the risk of IT transformation, and drive down the cost of IT operations.

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