

CUSTOMER SOLUTION CASE STUDY



Summary



internet solutions
A DIVISION OF DIMENSION DATA

Customer:

Internet Solutions

Country or Region:

South Africa – JHB

Industry:

ICT

Company Profile:

Internet Solutions (IS) is South Africa's leading Internet Service Provider. Today, more than 80 percent of the top 250 listed South African companies use the IS network on a daily basis. IS has grown to over 4500 valued customers with a 33 percent share of the local leased-line market.

Business Situation:

Internet Solutions approached 3fifteen to redesign its Customer Zone website, migrating it to the .NET platform. The IS Customer Zone is a unique, secure web interface and an IS innovation which provides its customers with access to all the information and services they need to optimise their business environment, leading to effective business decision making.

Technologies used:

Microsoft SQL Server 2000
Microsoft SQL Server 2005
Microsoft .Net 2.0
Microsoft SharePoint Portal Server 2003
Microsoft CMS
Microsoft Reporting Services 2005
IBM xSeries 345
Dual Xeon 3Ghz

3fifteen redesigns Customer Zone for Internet Solutions

Situation

Internet Solutions (IS) approached 3fifteen to redesign its Customer Zone website, migrating it to the Microsoft .NET platform. The IS Customer Zone is a unique secure web interface that provides customers with access to information and tools allowing them to effectively manage the services they are provided by IS. This allows customers to optimise their business environments, leading to effective business decision making.

Apart from moving to the .Net framework IS needed to enhance Customer Zone with additional functionality for customers to monitor bandwidth, traffic and hosting services, obtain security alerts and be able to subscribe to notifications and services, log service requests, view backbone statistics and receive detailed statistical information on purchase-specific services and products.

A further requirement was for all customer systems to be monitored via the IS Global Service Centre's monitoring systems, providing comprehensive and real-time support services.

Internet Solutions Web Applications Solutions Manager, Elize Höll says that IS adds value to its customers by transforming statistical data into well directed customer action. She explains that the Customer Zone web interface is an example of this and is driven by advanced systems hosted within IS that enable customers to view real-time reporting on the services they have contracted with IS.

Client Background

Founded in 1995 with only six employees, Internet Solutions has grown to become South Africa's leading Internet Service Provider and forms part of the Dimension Data Group. Höll says that IS is a long time proponent of e-Business and has grown to over 4500 valued customers and a 33 percent share of the leased-line market, with its nearest competitor capturing 13 percent. IS now has over 800 employees.

More than 80 percent of the top 250 listed South African companies use the IS network on a daily basis and most second-tier local ISPs use IS as their network provider. Consequently, IS handles in excess of 70 percent of the country's dial-up traffic.

Internet Solutions has evolved from being just an Internet service provider to now being a full-blown converged communication service provider with a diverse range of solutions. IS provides the infrastructure, bandwidth and support services to enable effective collaboration across a variety of protocols via next-generation services.

Internet Solutions has created and fostered a number of partnerships with local and global organisations to secure the best and most comprehensive infrastructure available. These include BT in the UK and AT&T in the USA.

From corporate conglomerates to small businesses and home users, IS' customers are as diverse as its range of services. IS was the first South African company to supply switched virtual private networking solutions in 1997. This was the first of many ground-breaking technologies to be introduced into the local market by IS. The company has been at the forefront of bringing web-based application services and mobile solutions to market as well as expanding its offerings across the African continent.

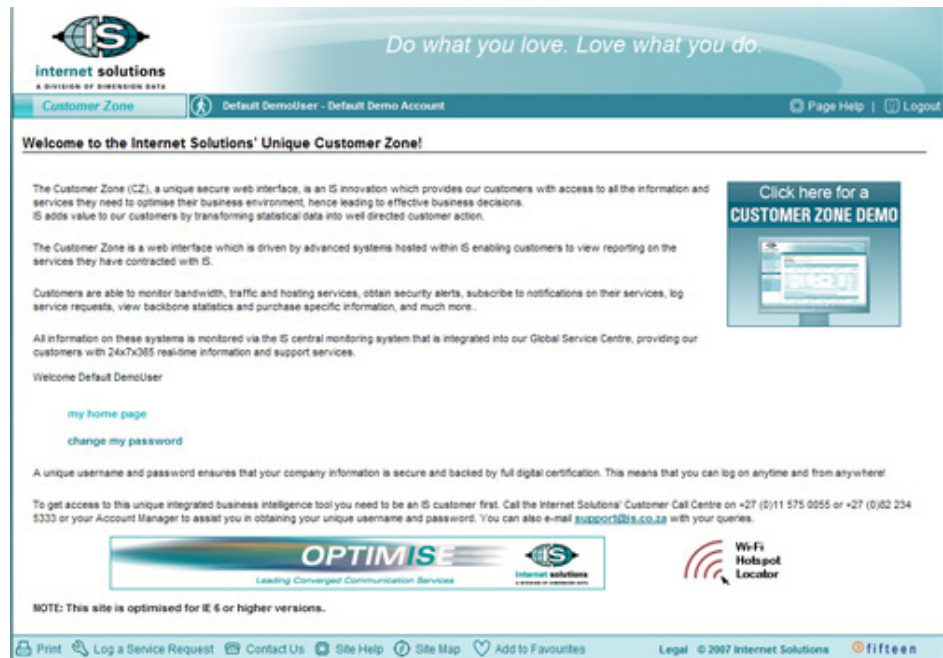
Solution

Microsoft applications solutions division of the Britehouse Group, 3fifteen redesigned and enhanced the functionality of IS' key customer web interface, migrating the application to Microsoft's .Net framework.

The live solution runs on two load balanced Windows Server 2003 machines. The live servers interact with a clustered Microsoft SQL 2005 database server alongside Siebel's SQL server and Internet Solutions' live CMS server. A staging environment has also been deployed for development, maintenance and fail-over purposes.

"IS adds value to its customers by transforming statistical data into well directed customer action. The Customer Zone is a web interface which is driven by advanced systems hosted within IS enabling customers to view reporting on the services they have contracted with IS."

Elize Höll
Web Application Solutions
Manager
Internet Solutions



Benefits

By moving to Microsoft's .Net framework the IS Customer Zone portal is now enabled with authentication logic, impersonation and role assignment. Höll explains that this ensures that security is effective and user provisioning is streamlined on the system with dynamic role assignment being based on the user's purchases in Siebel.

Site navigation and content is also customisable for each user allowing access to resources based on specific requirements that are listed within the user's role. Multiple authenticated users can be stacked allowing identity switching to happen on the fly. This allows site administrators and resellers to securely run in the context of another user for testing and monitoring. Comprehensive logs are recorded of all activities that take place on the system.

3fifteen developed the solution to take advantage of Microsoft's Windows Management Instrumentation, allowing administrators to monitor each site. They can view how many users are currently online, which modules are being accessed most frequently and other information. This data can then be used by IS to optimise Customer Zone according to peak use times and customer trends.

The solution has been designed and deployed to allow for seamless switchover to take place between online and offline servers. This enables maintenance activities that do not impact on user experience whatsoever and with zero downtime required for switching environments.

3fifteen has transformed IS' Customer Zone into an effective .Net-based solution with enhanced security, single sign-on functionality for users and a streamlined secondary development environment, allowing the company to provide its customers with a powerful tool for managing the services provided to them.