

Case Study



Old Mutual Zimbabwe

Based in Harare, Old Mutual Zimbabwe had been using an ICL Series 39 mainframe (and its predecessors) since the 1970s and had developed a comprehensive set of bespoke applications for running its business. Two years ago Old Mutual embarked on an exercise to replace its VME-based applications with packages with a view to completely remove its dependence on the mainframe. However, there remained numerous applications that could not be easily or economically replaced. In April 2004, EBE Computing was requested to migrate the remaining applications to Old Mutual's new platform, a mid-range server running the Windows 2000 operating system.

Old Mutual Zimbabwe now runs their full suite of applications on the new platform with the legacy applications fully integrated with the packaged solutions.

- OMZ employed an ICL mainframe from the 1970s to host the primary systems for their policy control, agent management and other backend functions
- ICL Zimbabwe advised the organisation of the cessation of hardware support for the Series 39 mainframes. Since early 2004 hardware support had been provided by ICL on a 'best endeavour' basis, and the machine's performance and reliability was deteriorating rapidly
- A proposal from ICL to upgrade to a new Fujitsu Nova-series mainframe was untenable in view of the considerable incremental expense to the organisation, especially in context of the prevailing economic circumstances in Zimbabwe
- Since running critical backend applications on unsupported hardware was not an option, OMZ were obliged to secure their application on an affordable, low risk alternative
- Options for maintaining continuing operations were narrowed down to four choices:
 1. Upgrade to a new ICL/Fujitsu mainframe
 2. Carry out a manual migration/rewrite of the mainframe applications to a server platform



3. Implement a package to replace the applications
4. Use OpenSCL to migrate to a Windows 2000 server platform.

RISK ANALYSIS	ICL Hardware Upgrade	Manual Migration	Implement Package	OpenSCL Migration
Time-of-conversion	N/A	2.12 man-years	3 man-years	1.2 man-years
Data Migration Included	Yes	No	No	Yes
Level-of-Risk	Low	High	High	Low
3-Year Economic Impact	£1.1 mil	£1.5 mil	£0.8 mil	£0.2 mil

On commencing the project EBE Computing found that a substantial amount of original source code was missing and, to complete the migration, were obliged to recreate/rewrite the code. Also, as the applications were written many decades ago much of the detailed knowledge of the systems was absent, further complicating the migration process. Nevertheless, EBE Computing is proud of the fact that, under difficult circumstances, these tasks were completed to the satisfaction of OMZ and the system achieved go-live eight months after initiating the project.

The next phase of EBE Computing’s involvement with OMZ will involve the ‘modernisation’ of the environment, specifically enabling the organisation to exploit the relational database with extensive queries and reporting facilities.

EBE Computing
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