

Hitachi Storage Solutions at Work

ABN AMRO Hypotheken Group

INDUSTRY Finance

SOLUTION Content Archive Platform

Hardware and Software Solution—Hitachi Content Archive Platform

Hardware—Hitachi Universal Storage Platform™ model USP100

Services—Provided by Hitachi Data Systems partners Getronics PinkRocade and VDD IQware



"I'm pleasantly surprised by the business flexibility demonstrated by Hitachi Data Systems."

*Koen Teeuwisse
IT Administration Manager
ABN AMRO Hypotheken Group*



Intelligent Hitachi Storage Brings Cost Savings, Increased Usability to Large Netherlands Mortgage Provider

The merger of Bouwfonds Hypotheken and several divisions of ABN AMRO in January 2006 established ABN AMRO Hypotheken Group, one of the largest specialist mortgage providers in the Netherlands. It also created storage integration and legislative compliance challenges. Hitachi Data Systems helped the new company address these challenges with the Hitachi Universal Storage Platform™ and Hitachi Content Archive Platform.

ABN AMRO Hypotheken Group handles everything at the “far end” of the entire mortgage cycle—from applications for mortgages up to and including the final mortgage repayment. It also handles all the corresponding documentation, such as notarial deeds and pledge data. It holds approximately 90 billion euros in outstanding mortgages.

The biggest challenge in integrating the merger was extricating the Bouwfonds’ systems; the mortgage division had to be separated from the rest of the organization. “We had very little in-house expertise in this area, let alone experience,” explains Koen Teeuwisse, IT administration manager at ABN AMRO Hypotheken Group. “That’s why our

partner Getronics PinkRoccade took charge of the process of untangling the standard systems.” But Teeuwisse wasn’t satisfied with the plans for storage.

Although Bouwfonds already worked with EMC, Teeuwisse wanted a broader market orientation. After evaluating a number of vendors, he was particularly impressed by software from Hitachi Data Systems. “The hardware isn’t very exciting—in the end, all these systems look alike,” he explains. “It is the software that has to do the actual work. In that area, Hitachi Data Systems is way ahead of the pack.” When Hitachi Data Systems came up with a quick and attractive quotation, Teeuwisse did not have to think twice.

“Hitachi Data Systems has a clear vision of how data should be handled,” Teeuwisse explains. “Its business consultants have the necessary experience and expertise and are very service-minded. This is very convenient for us because it means we don’t have to hire new employees for this purpose.” That’s why the company doesn’t have an in-house storage specialist. “We rely completely on Hitachi Data Systems,” he notes.

Strict Legislation

Hitachi Data Systems began by implementing a redundant SAN based on the Hitachi Universal Storage Platform model USP100. It connects the two sites in Amersfoort through a proprietary fiber optic network. Each site hosts 3TB of data, an amount that is growing rapidly. Although the SAN is just a storage system, the real value of this solution lies in its intelligence.

“Bouwfonds never really worried about data storage,” explains Teeuwisse. “This may seem peculiar for a financial institution, but Bouwfonds is not a bank. It didn’t need to meet strict banking guidelines.” The company had used an optimal system, a sort of mega-jukebox with CDs. All data was written and stored in the same way. But once the company became a division of ABN AMRO, this was no longer an option. “We now have to comply with very strict legislation,” notes Teeuwisse. “For instance, we are only allowed to store certain privacy-sensitive details for a maximum period of three months, while other data has to remain stored for no less than 30 years.”

The “jukebox” had to go, even though it required a major effort to dispose of the device. “It was so big that it never would have fit through the doors of the new premises,” Teeuwisse laughs. The system was replaced by a Hitachi Content Archive Platform. Now

the data is stored on the Content Archive Platform rather than on CD. It is much more accessible. It is also easier to retrieve because of the intelligence added by the Content Archive Platform.

Intelligence

“The Content Archive Platform sees to it that we store exactly the right amount of data, neither too much nor too little,” comments Teeuwisse. “The system also makes sure we can retrieve information easily.” He notes that the speed of searching has greatly increased, dramatically reducing the time that employees



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need to spend retrieving documentation. The time needed for creation of backups has also been significantly reduced.

Teeuwisse especially likes that the new system allows cross-archive searching by combining various archives and search methods. Users can base their search on metadata or search the data proper. “In the past, a major effort was required to collect all the relevant documentation—mails, quotations, deeds—for a single mortgage,” he explains. “Now a single query will suffice to gather all of these documents.” In addition, the company can define which users are allowed to search at which level. “Record information officers and corporate governance staff need to view all documents,” he explains. “Call center agents are more interested in finding only documents and correspondence associated with a particular customer.”

ABN AMRO Hypotheken Groep can now also use various storage methods to balance the costs of storage against the accessibility of data. By handling data in a more intelligent way, the bank has achieved major cost efficiencies while increasing data availability.

“The new storage environment involved a major investment that was impossible to avoid,” says Teeuwisse. “You simply have no choice. Reliable data is a precondition, particularly for a mortgage provider. Although these costs cannot be earned back, that doesn’t mean you should ignore cost efficiencies that you can achieve. You have

to calculate the risks you are willing to take for each type of data or process.” Of course, not all data must be equally accessible. In the future, cheaper storage methods will be deployed for less critical data.

No More Paper

All the applications used by ABN AMRO Hypotheken Group were supplied by VDD IQware. In collaboration with Hitachi Data Systems, this company created a link between the Content Archive Platform and Cesar, the document management system used by ABN AMRO. All notarial documents, deeds, counterpart originals, and pledge data are recorded into it. It took them only two days to successfully integrate these systems. Teeuwisse is convinced that the combination

of Cesar with the Content Archive Platform has created a state-of-the-art system. “Paper has been almost entirely eliminated,” he notes. “The whole process has been automated, so we can process documents very quickly.

“We have been able to achieve cost efficiencies by handling data in a more intelligent way. At the same time, the availability of our environment has increased and search queries can be handled more quickly and easily.” says Teeuwisse. “Hardware alone is not enough. The most important thing is to have a clear vision, and the right software to translate that vision into reality. Hitachi Data Systems has been the perfect partner for us throughout the entire cycle.”

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