

travianet GmbH

Reflection Desktop delivers stable host access environment for mission-critical solution

Overview

travianet is a large travel agency with almost twenty years experience, acting as a specialist service provider handling bookings for online travel portals. Part of the FTI GROUP, an international travel company headquartered in Munich, the company employs around 7,000 people worldwide, has offices in Germany, Austria, France, and Switzerland, and sells travel to around 120 countries to be the fourth-largest tour operator in Europe.

Challenge

Daily operations in FTI GROUP rely on travianet's comprehensive Travel Information System (TIS). What was initially designed as a mid-office system, has developed over the years into an efficient all-round system. Today, TIS doesn't just control the entire booking processing system and fully-automated partner

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JÜRGEN WEICKL

CEO
travianet GmbH

settlement system for its 10,000 travel partners; it is also used to address all phone system interfaces, as well as reservation and operator systems—and much more. TIS is continually refined and developed based on .NET. The system is modular and flexible so that it can be optimally customized to fit a travel partner's particular needs and technical architecture.

Over 600 FTI Group travel agents leverage TIS to serve customers 365 days each year, over 90 hours per week. They use an embedded terminal emulator in TIS which enables them to access real-time data hosted on IBM iSeries 5. Markus Stehle, Managing Director at GISMO, travianet's IT partner, explains the challenge: "travianet used IBM iAccess for terminal emulation, but as our user numbers grew, this became more problematic. The platform wasn't stable, and this sometimes resulted in system crashes. With so many agents depending on the availability of TIS, we knew we had to look for an alternative, more reliable solution."

Solution

In close cooperation with travianet, Mr Stehle researched the market and found Micro Focus Reflection Desktop, a Windows-based host access solution that connects desktop and mobile users to IBM (mainframe, AS/400), UNIX, Linux, OpenVMS, and HP systems. A trial



At a Glance

- **Industry**
Travel and Hospitality
- **Location**
Germany
- **Challenge**
Replace an unstable host access solution that was negatively affecting agent productivity and customer satisfaction
- **Products and Services**
Micro Focus Reflection Desktop
- **Success Highlights**
 - + Much improved platform stability and availability
 - + Transparent migration for end-users, maintaining key features
 - + Close cooperation with Micro Focus Support and Development

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MARKUS STEHLE

Managing Director
GISMO

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version gave the team some hands-on experience to test whether Reflection Desktop could provide the features as well as the stability and performance travianet needed.

Mr Stehle comments: “As TIS is in-house developed and heavily customized, we didn’t expect the transition to another host access solution to be completely smooth. For instance, our users have created hundreds of macros in iAccess. These contain German text strings and initially it looked like we couldn’t import these into Reflection Desktop. However, when we raised the issue with Micro Focus, their Support and Development teams came up with an innovative solution for this, saving us a lot of rework. The level of professionalism we encountered in the Micro Focus support convinced us they were the right partner for us.”

Micro Focus Support also worked with travianet and Mr Stehle to ensure any features available through iAccess were replicated within the Reflection Desktop environment, so that the transition would be entirely seamless for the end-users. As iAccess had been in use for many years and TIS is a highly customized solution, this required a lot of team collaboration.

From a business perspective, the investment in Reflection Desktop needed to be justified, as iAccess was already included in an IBM service offering. However, when Jürgen Weickl, CEO of travianet, saw the results of Reflection Desktop, he was happy to authorize the

investment: “In our business, availability and performance are everything. We do not want to keep our partners waiting because our system isn’t reliable. The .NET API available within Reflection Desktop really helps us be responsive as we have been able to automate data entry and retrieval. Reflection Desktop could enhance our customer service, which is our business justification.”

Results

To the end-users, the move to Reflection Desktop has been largely transparent, which was the objective. The extensive .NET API and the breadth of configurable options allowed Reflection Desktop to replicate all of the iAccess features and familiar user experience. However, users noticed the increased platform stability, which means the system is always available to them.

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Mr Weickl concludes: “Our business totally depends on TIS and we are happy to report that, leveraging Reflection Desktop, we now have a stable platform with full system availability.”