



Performance Leap for SPIDA's VAX Applications

By Holeon GmbH

With the increasing amounts of processed data and users over the past years, the VAX 4000-500A system of SPIDA, a state pension fund ("Ausgleichskasse") in Zurich, became more and more the bottleneck of the company. Due to poor response times the business processes were being slowed down and the daily work was becoming a patience test for the users. The VAX applications needed to be kept for some more time. So, one looked for possible solution alternatives for the problem. However, VAX computers are no more being sold by Hewlett Packard, so simply moving to a larger VAX was not possible. Therefore, one looked into replacing the VAX by an Alpha processor, which meant a migration of the applications and the data. The estimated cost and the risk of this alternative were too high for SPIDA. In addition, this alternative wouldn't be a lasting solution either, because HP had already announced the end of the production of Alpha processors.

Löwenfels Partner AG and Holeon GmbH suggested to replace the VAX 4000-500A system by CHARON-VAX, running on an Intel-based platform with Windows. This solution would eliminate all problems of a migration and, at the same time, bring a significant performance increase.

SPIDA decided to commission a feasibility study to Löwenfels and Holeon. They mapped the existing VAX's hardware configuration on CHARON-VAX/XL Plus running on a 2.4 GHz dual CPU Xeon with 2Gb memory and Windows 2000. The operating system of the original VAX, the application and the data were copied at once using the full back-up / restore function of OpenVMS. After restore, the system was immediately ready for testing. One conducted a series of performance tests and measurements. The results were very encouraging. The average performance increase towards the original VAX was around 3-4 times.

The feasibility results, the clearly lower investment need, operational cost and risk as opposed to a migration convinced SPIDA. They gave the order to implement the final solution with CHARON-VAX.

First, further analysis, fine-tuning and optimization of OpenVMS and the disk structure took place. Then the target host system was chosen based on the results: An HP Proliant ML530 with dual Xeon 3GHz, 2GB RAM, two-channel RAID controller with 128 MB cache and fast hot-swap SCSI disks with 15'000 rpm. As in the feasibility tests, CHARON-VAX/XL Plus for Windows was used. The whole disk of the VAX was transferred at once with backup/restore. After some off-line tests, the system was integrated in the existing environment and transferred to SPIDA.

After thorough and successful tests by SPIDA, which showed a 5 times performance increase towards the VAX 4000-500A, the system was opened up to the users and became productive – without any interruption of the running operations.

Löwenfels Partner AG is a vendor of insurance applications, located in Lucerne, Switzerland. Holeon GmbH is the certified Value Added Reseller of CHARON-VAX emulator products in Switzerland.

Löwenfels Partner AG Haldenstrasse 6 6006 Luzern Switzerland Telefon +41-41-418 44 00 Fax +41-41-418 44 44 http://www.loewenfels.ch/	Holeon GmbH Tellenhofweg 1 6045 Meggen Switzerland Tel: +41 41 377 46 11 Fax: +41 41 377 46 20 email: hoffmann@holeon.ch
---	---