MIBRAG migrates its critical mining systems from OpenVMS to a flexible Windows server environment

MIBRAG needed to de-risk the dependency of its critical applications on an ageing OpenVMS platform. There was no possible package replacement, and migration offered the quickest, cheapest and minimum risk option.

The Client

Mitteldeutsche Braunkohlengesellschaft mbH (MIBRAG) is a modern, high-tech mining company headquartered in Zeitz. MIBRAG is one of the largest brown coal producers in Germany, mining up to 20 million tons of lignite (brown coal) each year – providing reliable power and heat.

Continual investment, paired with the use of state-of-the-art technology, makes MIBRAG an important factor in the economy, the community and in cultural life in the region around Zeitz. It employs around 2,000 people in secure jobs, provides vocational training for young people and contributes sustainably to regional economic development.

In addition to its mines, MIBRAG also operates a processing plant and three power stations. These supply power for mining operations, and district heating and process steam for around 9,000 local customers.

The Challenge

MIBRAG was running critical lignite mining, modelling and data processing systems on ageing HP OpenVMS Alpha server hardware. The applications were written in Fortran using the Rdb database and DCL scripting language, and supported the production processes and the accounting functions of the open cast mining operations.

For example, the quality of lignite (heating value, sulphur content, etc.) is traceable throughout the whole process from planning, mining and different means of transport to the customers. This is important because there are different modelling systems for each transport type, including 'shuffling' lignite between stockpiles, which must meet strict values. Data is delivered by OPC-Servers, from each device and laboratory to the various applications and displayed on the screens from which the operations are controlled.

Client >
MIBRAG

Sector >
Mining

Project >
OpenVMS Application Migration

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Rainer Waldbauer >
CIO >
MIBRAG

CASE STUDY

MIBRAG migrates critical systems from OpenVMS

Rainer Waldbauer, CIO of MIBRAG, commented,
"We needed to de-risk the dependency of our critical applications on the ageing OpenVMS Alpha platform, and with there being no possible package replacement, migration offered the quickest, cheapest and minimum risk option."

The Solution

MIBRAG asked us to migrate the critical mathematical modelling and data processing applications.

The process started with an Advanced PathFinder Assessment phase in order to analyse the applications' assets and assess the scope and complexities of the project. The PathFinder Assessment also ensured a firm price for the project up front.

The applications were then migrated to an open and more flexible Microsoft Windows Server environment with Oracle 11g replacing the Rdb database.

Open Libr8 and Open DCL products were deployed to support the OpenVMS system services and lexical functions and DCL scripts respectively.

By using our OpenVMS toolset to automate the majority of the migration process, we were able to shorten delivery times, minimise costs and ensure the quality of the migration.

Major Benefits

With the move to the Windows environment, MIBRAG has been able to consolidate its skill-set by maintaining all its applications within the more productive Microsoft Visual Studio development environment, and this will enable better future integration into the .NET architecture.

Taken together, MIBRAG will be able to reduce their operating costs while obtaining greater reliability and flexibility for the future.

Waldbauer continued, *"We chose Advanced for this complex and demanding migration as it had both the technical expertise to convert our OpenVMS applications to Windows and also its well-established migration methodology. They delivered on time and on budget."*

Tim Jones of Advanced concluded, *"We were delighted to have been chosen for this significant project, and it further consolidates our position as the premier OpenVMS migration company.*

More and more companies with mature mission-critical applications on older platforms view migration as the most cost-effective and least risk replacement option."

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Rainer Waldbauer >
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