

Crocus Technology has more time for R&D thanks to their new AWS data platform



Although generating mountains of engineering data during their activities, information didn't flow smoothly through the organisation for the Franco-Californian company, Crocus Technology. Engineers trying to answer business or even engineering questions ran into technical problems and availability issues when creating reports. Crocus Technology reached out to Algorhythm to help them overcome their challenges. Now, Crocus supports their business via a centralized, future-proof data platform in the AWS cloud that gathers information from multiple sources in a uniform and systematic way. This frees up time for the engineering team who can now focus more on product development.

Tying up engineers with data wrangling

The technology centre of Crocus in Grenoble constantly needed to answer a wide range of questions from people across many departments. They had plenty of data, but compiling it to create appropriate datasets to answer specific questions had become a very time-consuming activity. Ken Mackay, VP of Technology at the company: “Decentralized storage with little to no uniformity in formatting, resulted in a less than ideal workflow for any data analysis. It made answering simple questions such as ‘What are our KPI trends over the past few months’ a real struggle in a reasonable time.”

Mackay: “Building datasets to answer such questions simply took too long, requiring several manual interventions to combine sources and increasing the chance of human error. Moreover, it consumed resources and detracted from the technology centre’s main task: developing our innovative products based on our XtremeSense TMR technology.”

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Finding the right partner

To overcome those obstacles, Crocus Technology looked for a partner to help them unlock the potential hidden in their data. That search was easier said than done, as many potential suppliers just tried to sell them their particular solution: “Most tried to steer us towards their preferred setup or told us that our demands were impossible to meet. However, we were set on getting a broader input and being able to compare all the pros and cons to make sure we got the best solution for our needs. This continued until we met Algorhythm. Already from the initial discussions, Algorhythm showed that they listened to us and were able to communicate in plain language what they thought was most appropriate for us. This openness and their willingness to find a solution for our needs are what won us over.”

A unique solution for a unique situation

To ensure the right fit for Crocus, Algorhythm talked to the team to better understand the diversity of their various data sources, needs and expectations. A big task because of Crocus’ uniqueness says Ken Mackay: “Our patented XtremeSense TMR technology is quite revolutionary and it’s why standard data setups usually don’t work for us. By really listening to us, Algorhythm managed to create a data platform in the cloud that does the trick and is uniquely suited to our situation. Once we signed off on the setup, they implemented it for us and provided end-user training to make sure we knew how to work with our new tool. From start to finish, they were with us every step of the way.”



Scalable and secure in the cloud

At the recommendation of their new data partner, Crocus Technology decided to host the platform in the AWS cloud. “We were a bit hesitant to make the move,” Ken Mackay continues, “but Algorhythm addressed our concerns rationally and highlighted the benefits. AWS brings scalability, iron-clad security as well as having many additional modules that we can use on our data platform to expand its capabilities in the future, such as machine learning. It seemed only logical to follow their advice and we haven’t regretted it since.”

Answering business questions in a blink

“With our new data platform all of our data sources – and there are many – are poured into a central repository and moulded to a uniform format,” explains Mackay. “Because of that, we can get a much broader picture throughout our company. What’s more, it allows us to answer more complex questions more quickly. The impact is felt throughout the organisation. We’re able to do things so smoothly that we’re already taking them for granted, even though they weren’t even possible previously. This allows the business side of Crocus Technology to make better and more informed, data-driven decisions.”

More time for R&D

Crocus Technology makes state-of-the-art magnetic sensors for a wide range of applications. To stay at the top of their game, research and development is essential. Mackay: “In the past, monitoring progress and tracking KPI’s was detracting from the R&D activities. Now that compiling reports is much more straightforward, we can free up our engineers again to refocus on what they do best – developing excellent products. I am convinced this will enable us to drive further improvements and innovations through our focused R&D efforts and keep us as a pioneer within our market.”

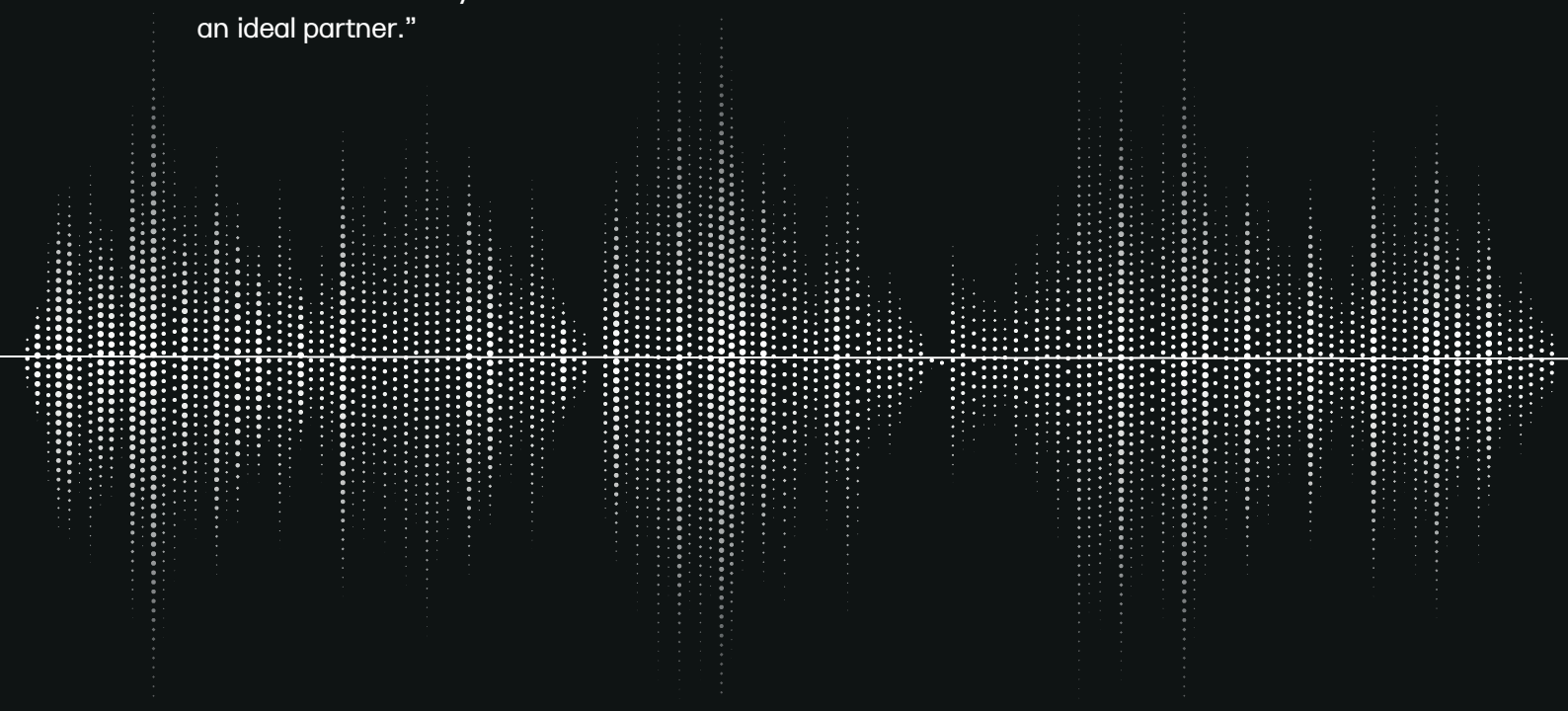


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Data projects can get quite technical. Algorhythm's ability to communicate everything in clear business terms that anyone understands, was much appreciated by Mackay: "I'm not an expert on databases and data platforms. At every step of the way, Algorhythm accommodated for that by communicating everything in plain language without the 'geek speak'. Algorhythm was able to successfully navigate the multiple internal engineering opinions and expectations even when sometimes divergent. Throughout the project, however, Algorhythm has shown a willingness to listen to us, to understand our end goal, to be flexible and to make sure we are satisfied. That's really what makes them an ideal partner."

Understand and control your data beforehand

Crocus had focused on getting data and implementing change quickly. However there had not been enough focus on data structure making datasets difficult to combine. Mackay: “A lack of formatting discipline meant we had to go through a couple of unnecessary iterations. The process of getting our data structures under control has taught us the benefits of structured formatting and going forward we will maintain this discipline!”



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