

Aozora Bank Enhances Visibility and Efficiency with Centralized Single Point of Contact Monitoring Solution from CA Technologies



CLIENT PROFILE

Industry: Finance

Company: Aozora Bank

Employees: 1,655 (consolidated as of March 2014)

Revenue: 4,922.4 billion yen (consolidated)

BUSINESS

Aozora Bank is an independent commercial bank based in Japan, with a focus on providing customers with reliable banking solutions and developing business growth.

CHALLENGE

To optimize its IT infrastructure, the bank needed to reduce its server estate by a third, so it undertook a project to consolidate and virtualize its servers, with the goal of bringing greater visibility of its core systems.

SOLUTION

With CA Unified Infrastructure Management the bank has a single, centralized tool to monitor its complex IT environment. The solution offers the scope and flexibility to support an evolving IT estate.

BENEFIT

The cost-effective solution allows the bank to monitor its systems from a single point of contact. This has drastically improved operational efficiency and minimized errors such as failed error alerts.

Business

Accelerating its strategic focus and embracing the next generation of IT

What sets Aozora Bank apart is its unique focus on core competencies, differentiating it from other Japanese mega banks or local banks. It aims to be known as a reliable banking partner its customers can rely on.

The bank's strategy consists of four pillars:

- Retail banking focusing on senior individual customers
- A proactive approach to SME businesses and other corporate customers
- Collaboration with regional financial institutions
- Advanced services in speciality finance areas.

The bank has a number of initiatives that align with these pillars, such as the subsidiary Aozora Investment Management Co. Ltd. established in February 2014. This is a strategic group aiming to strengthen the bank's financial offering for senior individual customers and regional financial institutions.

The bank is currently expanding its presence in Asia, enhancing services such as generating cross-border mergers and acquisitions and business-matching opportunities. It should be noted that the bank supports local banks as business partners and their customers' projects to expand their business overseas in order to support the local economy.

The key component supporting Aozora Bank's proactive business strategies is its IT estate. The bank has been working to develop a next-generation IT infrastructure to support business demands and increase efficiency. One example of this is the renewal of the business's core accounting system. The bank plans to replace the existing in-house system with a cloud-based accounting system in two years' time. It is expected that the implementation of a highly scalable and flexible cloud system will enable the bank to offer products and services that meet customers' needs faster than before.

Mr. Akio Tanaka, General Manager of the Infrastructure Management Division at Aozora Bank says, "Our difference from mega banks and local banks is our strength, but it also poses us a challenge in that we have to support a wide variety of smaller products. Such a unique business model impacts our IT too. The nature of a wide variety of small products tends to make the systems operate in silos, optimized for each purpose. Our main IT infrastructure challenge is how we resolve this and promote the optimization of the overall system."

Challenge

Renewing IT infrastructure and promoting overall optimization

“Our biggest challenge is maintaining system efficiency across a variety of products.”

Mr. Akio Tanaka

General Manager, Infrastructure Management Division, Aozora Bank

To optimize the IT infrastructure that forms the foundation for its information system, Aozora Bank has been working on two projects: virtualization/server consolidation and more transparent monitoring. “A few years ago, the CTO asked us to reduce the number of management points through virtualization, and since then, we have been working on a large-scale server consolidation using virtualization technologies. We had 1,100 physical servers in 2011 but the number has now been reduced to between 300-400. This will, of course, reduce the hardware cost, but we also hope to reduce operational cost,” explains Mr. Tanaka.

These measures have started to deliver returns: one example is the reduced number of calls to the bank’s service desk. When there is a fault in the system, business users make inquiries to the help desk. The number of these calls has now reduced by half.

Another target, enabling greater transparency, is critical for the advancement of IT infrastructure. By clearly being able to identify a fault, the IT team can identify a specific resolution. This clarity is a foundation for a continuous improvement, and the core solution in this area is CA Technologies CA Unified Infrastructure Management, which has been adopted as the monitoring solution.

Aozora Bank selected CA Unified Infrastructure Management after evaluating a number of products and solutions. Mr. Tanaka recalls, “I had experience in using most of the major monitoring software offerings, each having its pros and cons. One main reason we selected CA Unified Infrastructure Management was its affinity with the existing individually-optimized infrastructures, in addition to the newly developed infrastructures. It was also a highly cost-effective solution.”

CA Unified Infrastructure Management will eventually be adopted to monitor the bank’s entire information systems. Since the initial implementation at the end of FY2013, the footprint is being expanded in phases.

Solution

Faster responses to incidents and efficient monitoring

Aozora Bank selected CA Unified Infrastructure Management to enable central monitoring of its complex IT infrastructure. CA Unified Infrastructure Management offers not only active-inactive monitoring and threshold monitoring, but also a wide range of other functions, such as performance management and reporting.

The solution offers three main advantages: firstly its fast response to incidents. Many companies use different monitoring tools by technology or by division, and Aozora Bank was no exception. However, more monitoring tools increases the risk of delayed fault detection, making the identification of issues more challenging and resulting in longer time to recovery.

CA Unified Infrastructure Management enables central management of a complex IT environment from one portal screen. Various technologies from multi-layers such as cloud, network, server, and storage can be centrally monitored. The solution also supports quick response in case of incidents. Monitored items can be added or deleted easily with drag and drop.

The second key characteristic is the ability to provide flexible support for changes in the IT infrastructure, such as server consolidation and cloud implementation. Some monitoring tools are unable to support changes in the IT infrastructure, while CA Unified Infrastructure Management can support such changes with flexibility and scalability thanks to its simple architecture. It is a monitoring solution that can fit a large enterprise as well as a small or medium business.

The third advantage is ease of implementation and cost-effective performance, as Mr. Tanaka previously explained. It only took Aozora Bank three months for the implementation. Easy integration with other systems is another driver for such short implementation. In addition, the flexible licensing model allows implementation based on the business size and needs.

The user-friendly interface also helps operators to feel comfortable using CA Unified Infrastructure Management. For Aozora Bank, the internal engineer who was new to CA Unified Infrastructure Management when it was implemented is now confident in using the system after a short instruction.

Aozora Bank implemented CA Unified Infrastructure Management within its on-premise environment. As Mr. Tanaka confirms, “We decided it would be easier to utilize the system on-premise when considering integration with other systems.” CA Unified Infrastructure Management is also offered as a cloud-based solution.

Benefit

Single point of contact for monitoring drastically improves efficiency

“CA Unified Infrastructure Management offers us high cost performance.”

Mr. Akio Tanaka

General Manager, Infrastructure Management Division, Aozora Bank

Aozora Bank previously used different monitoring tools for each system. For example monitor A would be used for monitoring system A and monitor B for monitoring system B. One operator had to watch multiple dashboards to confirm that there were no issues anywhere in the system.

CA Unified Infrastructure Management eliminated such a demanding monitoring style. Mr. Tanaka says, “Multiple systems can be monitored from a single dashboard – called single point of contact monitoring. The operators on-site have reported that the system has made their job easier.”

He goes on to say, “The operators are not just monitoring the systems, they have many other tasks. Our big challenge is how we can reduce the amount of effort it takes them to do their jobs efficiently. We have not measured the quantitative effect yet, but we believe that the burden on operation has been drastically reduced since implementation.”

With the introduction of CA Technologies solutions including CA Unified Infrastructure Management, Aozora Bank is steadily making its way towards its business goals. The bank has also implemented CA Project & Portfolio Management, CA Privileged Identity Manager, and CA Service Desk Manager in addition to CA Unified Infrastructure Management. These solutions are integrated to improve operational efficiency and support visibility of the information system at Aozora Bank.

“Our users feel comfortable working with CA Unified Infrastructure Management.”

Mr. Akio Tanaka

General Manager, Infrastructure Management Division, Aozora Bank

Mr. Tanaka says, “From the perspective of ease of integrating solutions and efficiency of operation, it is better to use solutions from a single vendor rather than combining tools from multiple vendors. Our bank could benefit because we selectively used CA Technologies solutions.”

CA Unified Infrastructure Management not only helps operational efficiency, but also helps the bank to improve its service levels. According to Mr. Tanaka, errors such as undetected faults have been reduced to a new minimum thanks to single point of contact monitoring.

Furthermore, Mr. Tanaka is satisfied with the support offered by CA Technologies. “CA Technologies responds to our inquiries and requests swiftly. Above all, I appreciate the team’s commitment to respond to us as a customer.” This shows the bank has placed significant trust with CA Technologies. The partnership between Aozora Bank and CA Technologies is continuing to strengthen.



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