

# Norwich & Peterborough Building Society provides real-time data analysis to improve decision making

DATABridge minimises Unisys platform overhead by replicating DMSII data



Offering a full range of financial services including mortgages, savings accounts, personal loans, general insurance brokering, and independent financial advice, the Norwich and Peterborough Building Society also has a strong commercial lending operation. N&P employs around 1,000 staff, of whom 400 are based at its principal office in Peterborough, England, and has some 470,000 customers. In order to deliver the highest standards of customer service, the Building Society also offers Internet banking and a fully transactional website. N&P has assets valued at some £4.9 billion.

## The Challenge

As with every financial institution, it is critical for N&P to keep sensitive information secure and up to date, without any downtime. The Society's core IT systems are supported and maintained by a team of seven, headed up by IT Technical Services Manager Nigel Warnes, who leads the technical and operational staff at the Peterborough head office.

Around four years ago N&P were reviewing their business recovery plans and recognised that they needed to reappraise their method of securing data on the Unisys host. The Society wanted to move away from relying on tape transport and have a real-time replicated copy of the mainframe database. "Whichever solution was chosen we knew it also had to work as more than a business-recovery solution," said Warnes. "From the outset we wanted this to be a strategic investment that would help us offload expensive management-information queries by replicating data away from the live mainframe. This would bring multiple improvements to our processes and bring greater efficiencies and improved access to data residing on the mainframe."

There were also other drivers for this action as Warnes explained: "The normal method of open-database access can be risky—these risks are associated with accessing mainframe data directly using open connectivity when you don't have tight control over it."

The IT team set about trialling the Attachmate® DATABridge™ solution, initially to improve their business recovery processes. DATABridge is a comprehensive extract, transform and load (ETL) solution that integrates

## QUICK VIEW

### Problem

- Needed to replicate data from Unisys mainframe to a secondary system, for improved decision making and real-time data analysis.

### Solution

- Attachmate DATABridge.

### Results

- Ease of deployment.
- Improved analysis, decision-making, and responsiveness.
- Reduced MIPS costs.
- Enhanced performance, security, and productivity.
- Full ongoing technical support from Attachmate team.

critical information for business intelligence analysis. It can extract and transform master control program (MCP) host data or replicate data to a secondary system to improve decision support and real-time data analysis.

## The Benefits

The successful DATABridge deployment had an immediate impact on the company's ability to secure data for business recovery and also to replicate data for other uses. "There are two immediate benefits from our ability to replicate data from the mainframe to SQL—minimising our costs and overheads, and improving our ability to access cash flow and business monitoring in real time," said Warnes.

As data is updated on the host, DATABridge keeps the secondary database synchronised by replicating only changed data. Only changed records are transferred from the original to the destination database, which means that updates can be executed more frequently—with minimal host system overhead. This information can then be reported on, queried, or analysed to assist with decision-making.

"I'd estimate that around 70 percent of all data access within the organisation is for enquiry purposes, so there is no reason why we can't enquire on a copy of the data—it's a

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– Nigel Warnes,  
IT Technical Services  
Manager  
Norwich & Peterborough  
Building Society

far more efficient way of accessing data and simplifies the development process, reducing the need for more complex mainframe data access” Warnes said.

DATABridge now helps improve decision-making by integrating critical information for BI analysis. “In the present economic climate it’s particularly important that we have open access to live, real-time data so that we can react to events that may impact on our services,” said Warnes. “The alternative way of accessing up-to-date information would be to run the overnight reports multiple times a day, which would be costly and less effective.”

With DATABridge, N&P is better equipped to react to changes; its executives receive a message if there is an issue and can react quickly, which means they are now in more control of situations, without impacting their live systems. Since using the DATABridge solution, the Society has also realised savings on its mainframe costs.

The implementation process was straightforward and N&P had full support from Attachmate as they expanded its use from business recovery to management-information and cash-flow monitoring. “DATABridge’s capabilities were known to us from a business-recovery standpoint. We then moved to testing its capabilities for additional business requirements,” said Warnes. “This way we can continuously build the scope of its use. We always test its capabilities in lower priority situations before moving on to mission-critical use, so that we can learn and fix any issues before working in a live environment. In this sense we’re always confident the solution can fulfill its objectives.”

## Fraud detection

As well as business recovery and cash-flow and business monitoring, the system is also helping to detect fraud. Warnes said, “using real-time replication of data, we now detect potential fraudulent activity even more quickly, saving many thousands of pounds of potential loss.” For added security, N&P is looking at options where DATABridge can be used to further reduce risk of fraud and money laundering. DATABridge-enabled real-time feeds from the DMSII environment via SQL will play a critical role in that implementation.

## The Future

N&P plans to extend their use of DATABridge in other ways, too. The IT team is in the process of replacing further daily extracts with real-time replication of data to a SQL data warehouse system, which will provide further significant processing efficiencies and MIPS savings. The Society will also be using DATABridge to link to its CRM system—which is being developed in-house using data replication to feed the system.

Warnes concluded, “DATABridge was a strategic investment that is enabling us to meet our long term objectives of improving efficiency and decreasing costs—by reducing our resource requirements and minimising usage costs on the Unisys platform. The solution reflects our overall approach of being responsive, prepared, and proactively taking control of our future. With all of these benefits we can more than justify the investment with quantifiable advantages for our customers and the Society.”

## About Attachmate

Attachmate delivers advanced software for terminal emulation, application integration, and secure communications. Our NetIQ business provides solutions for automating IT processes and managing performance, security, and compliance of distributed IT. With our technologies, more than 65,000 businesses worldwide are putting their IT assets to work in new and meaningful ways. [www.attachmate.com](http://www.attachmate.com).



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