

PI Data Analytics ramps up security and scalability with Azure



Client profile

Purchasing Index (PI) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Comprara, a procurement consultancy that helps customers reduce the overall cost of acquisition through best-practice sourcing and purchasing strategies, processes and technologies.

Their PI Data Analytics platform has been helping clients across industries to better manage their procurement spend for more than 20 years.

They work with clients and software partners to specify and develop technology solutions across the procurement process.

With their legacy cloud environment reaching end of life, Comprara decided to migrate their purchasing data analytics platform that powers their PI Data Analytics service to Microsoft Azure.

Comprara wanted to ensure that their clients would continue to have an exceptional user experience and their security infrastructure would evolve to stay ahead of the ever-changing threat landscape. Working with us, they took the opportunity to benchmark the performance of the environment as well as conduct a full security audit. With close cooperation between Comprara and NTT DATA and detailed planning, the migration was completed with minimal impact on the organization and their clients.



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Ben Shute
CEO, Comprara

Business need

Delivering critical purchasing intelligence

Through their PI Data Analytics service, Comprara provides a critical capability for organizations across Australia and New Zealand, enabling them to gather vital information about their purchasing trends.

Comprara CEO Ben Shute explains that purchasing managers use the Comprara data analytics platform to assess spending trends and capture data that would otherwise be time-consuming and challenging to incorporate. "A lot of the information related to purchasing exists in unstructured data. Our platform uses artificial intelligence and machine learning to capture and categorize that data. This allows the platform to differentiate between a scalpel and a laptop and correctly attribute it."

Having access to this information allows purchasing managers to monitor their spending patterns. They can also create data visualizations to ensure they're able to optimize this critical function. With high-profile organizations, including banks and hospitals, using this service, availability and security are critical.

Solution

Moving critical workloads to Microsoft Azure with minimal disruption

With the retirement of their legacy cloud platform, the decision was made to migrate workloads to Microsoft Azure.

As these systems hosted critical data and services, the migration had to proceed with minimal impact to their clients.

After a thorough planning process involving both the NTT DATA and PI Data Analytics teams, the workloads were moved to Azure over a weekend, with very little disruption.

"The migration process involved moving our production servers to Azure and the project plan executed by the team was impeccable," says Shute. "NTT DATA has successfully completed our migration to Azure with zero issues. Six months into our migration, we haven't experienced any issues, and the post-migration support we've received has been outstanding."

Prior to migration, the NTT DATA team executed a full performance benchmark for the existing environment, which provided the data needed to measure the performance of the Microsoft Azure platform. This insight allows Comprara to scale their resources up or down, while ensuring their clients receive a consistent user experience.

Improving their security posture was also of critical importance. The sensitivity of some of the data processed by their system means that they need to take a proactive stance in addressing the ever-evolving security landscape.

"A secure foundation is critical to ensuring that our clients can trust us with their information," comments Shute. "The importance of information security for both us and our clients can't be overstated. It's critical that we take all possible steps to protect information from data breaches, unauthorized access and other disruptive data security threats."

To protect virtual machines from any malicious activity, we implemented an application gateway with web application filtering.

Outcomes

Secure and scalable cloud platform

The migration from the legacy platform to Azure has provided PI Data Analytics with a future-proof infrastructure platform and but also enabled them to align their security environment with industry best practice.

Benchmarking performance

The performance benchmarking we undertook before the migration provided the insights needed to optimize their environment in the future. With a clear view of the user experience, they can explore opportunities to reduce the cost of the service without any impact on quality.

Future-proof security

With a secure foundation, they are able to protect their own and their clients' data, protecting their clients and their reputation against the risk of a data breach.

Seamless migration

The long-standing relationship between PI Data Analytics and NTT DATA ensured that the two teams were able to work closely to quickly address issues during the migration. This reduced the likelihood of a rollback being required and minimized any potential impact on clients.

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