

Polaris Financial Group



EMC information lifecycle management solutions boost online transaction efficiency and reliability

Polaris Financial Group is among Taiwan's top three securities corporations and voted the most promising e-commerce business. As the brand of choice in Taiwan's online assets management and new financial product markets, Polaris' business includes investment consulting, investment trust, assets management, futures trading, and financial information.

Committed to innovative and professional services, Polaris deployed online financial services in 1999, with a focus on security, reliability, and responsiveness. Today, the company operates in a 24/7 global environment with competition from the U.S., Europe, and Japan—underscoring the need for a storage solution with superior availability and performance to maintain its competitive edge.

Polaris plans to minimize its total cost of ownership and realize benefits of integrated storage consolidation with an information lifecycle management strategy and comprehensive tiered storage solutions. This will enable the company to focus on extracting value from business information and creating more business opportunities.

Protecting transaction data

Polaris chose the EMC Symmetrix® storage system after considering EMC's comprehensive experience, internationally proven service quality, and well-established brand name. The company also chose EMC's storage management software, including EMC ControlCenter™, PowerPath®, TimeFinder®, SAN Manager™, and Symmetrix Optimizer for implementing a 24/7, zero-fault storage area network (SAN) for online financial transactions.

"Apart from satisfying our most stringent requirements and specifications, reputation is another main reason we chose EMC's solutions," says Cheng-Yi Lin, assistant manager of E-commerce Business. "According to the feedback from other companies, EMC is well known in industry and has an excellent brand name."

Customer transaction information is Polaris' most important asset and only a sustainable, comprehensive information management and protection solution can ensure peace of mind for investors. Symmetrix stores important e-transaction information to facilitate instant mission-critical online transactions. The company also plans to use EMC CLARiiON® storage to store other vital information, such as data warehouse and Microsoft Exchange e-mails.

"Now securities, futures, and options can be traded at Polaris' e-commerce platform," says Lin. "Security and stability were our primary considerations in choosing storage solutions. EMC's SAN integrated our front- and back-end business applications, and provided benefits of storage consolidation and centralized management."

Since May 2004, Polaris has traded NT\$209,165,850 thousand in securities, 369,709 contracts in futures, and 609,644 contracts in options. E-transactions accounted for over 50 percent of the volume in all three categories and are based on EMC's storage solution.

"Average storage equipment can accommodate up to 90 percent of CPU utilization. EMC Symmetrix provides automation, high stability, high performance, and a well-proven storage system which supports multiple open systems and mainframe platforms. With up to 12 gigabytes of cache memory, it reduces CPU utilization to an astonishing 10 percent, delivering a seamless and instant online transaction environment."

Cheng-Yi Lin
Assistant Manager of E-commerce Business

EMC networked storage solution meets information growth challenges

Polaris' information architecture uses multiple Windows-based servers to support e-mails, databases, and internally developed online transaction applications. EMC's tiered storage consolidates all application servers to reduce IT management costs and increase storage management efficiency through a single integrated storage infrastructure.

According to Lin, Polaris has been working on consolidation and knows it is important. Of the two items being consolidated, one is securities futures and options, the other is the comprehensive investment earning analysis provided for investors through the online services of Polaris Financial Airport.

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All of Polaris' realtime online transaction information is now stored in EMC Symmetrix. Polaris plans to implement an information lifecycle management strategy and the first step is data classification.

"Online information needs an instant response, but not for data that is more than a year old," says Lin. "When our customer base grows in the future, data will move automatically between EMC CLARiiON and Symmetrix to achieve maximum cost-effectiveness."

PowerPath enables shorter response times and increased server stability

“EMC solutions play a very important role in Polaris’ overall IT infrastructure,” says Lin. “Implementing an EMC Symmetrix-based SAN environment is a quantum leap for our IT infrastructure. For example, many of our value-added services face competition from other companies. But their response time can be up to 30 seconds, while ours is only 0.3 seconds. Also, Polaris is the only securities trader that can provide transaction statements and queries spanning from Polaris’ first day of operation up to today. The EMC storage architecture, as well as EMC PowerPath multiple-path I/O capabilities, greatly enhance our data query speed. Online transaction volume will surge when important events take place. During peak times, a good storage infrastructure is particularly important. In a recent Taiwan election there was a measurable increase in online use. The transient surge in transaction volume could cause transaction delays or even server downtime. PowerPath’s automatic load balancing enabled our Symmetrix systems to maintain their high performance and stability. As a result, Polaris delivered consistent service quality with no transaction delays.”

To speed up the time-to-market of its financial products, Polaris’ R&D team must develop new application features without interrupting server operation. EMC TimeFinder software provides business continuance volumes, which instantly create a point-in-time mirror of all online data. This allows developers to create new value-added financial services with faster time-to-market in a realistic but independent testing environment without disrupting online transaction activities.

EMC Services ensures peace of mind

EMC Services helped to determine an optimal information storage infrastructure. The shortened system deployment time and faster time-to-market have significantly increased the information ROI. Polaris is particularly impressed with EMC’s call-home alert functionality, which proactively identifies system problems and provides remedies to avoid data damage and system downtime.

“Among all our IT equipment, EMC’s solutions take the least amount of effort to manage,” says Lin. “Sometimes I almost forget about their existence. When a hardware failure occurs, the call-home mechanism automatically notifies Polaris and EMC sends technicians to service the equipment. This feature offers great peace of mind. For futures and securities traders, even a one-minute delay makes a huge difference and can cause loss of customer assets. With EMC storage hardware and software, we can safeguard customers’ information assets. EMC is a reliable partner. When we implement our offsite mirror system in the future, EMC solutions will be our first choice.”



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Customer Profile