

# Tailor-made solutions

eGamingReview talks to **Ardenta** and **Zeus Technology** about customer retention, improving IT performance and overcoming challenges by providing a bespoke service

**A**S LEADERS IN PROVIDING highly performant and resilient IT infrastructures, Ardenta's customers include some of the biggest names in eGaming. In addition to offering technical expertise, Ardenta seeks to add value by addressing the business needs of its clients. As such, it understands that improved customer loyalty is one of the primary concerns for eGaming operators, and is not complacent when it comes to delivering IT solutions which align with the ever-changing market. Key to this is partnering with innovative IT solutions providers such as Zeus Technology, which specialises in providing software load-balancing and traffic-management solutions. "We always select best-of-breed partners to work with and we are very pleased to have Zeus on board," said Scott Hanson, technical director, Ardenta.

## Retaining high-value customers

Ardenta has incorporated into its offering the latest generation Zeus software to manage web traffic and enhance customer loyalty. The Zeus Traffic Manager software is a unique addition to Ardenta's portfolio of infrastructure solutions in its ability to identify incoming traffic to a site. Using this information, it can make decisions based upon where that traffic has come from and what that traffic represents. In the

case of undesirable traffic, from distributed denial-of-service (DDOS) attacks to screen-scraping robots, the client is able to bar access to the site, assign a low priority to that traffic or even amend the content that gets sent back to the screen-scraping robot. It enables the identification and redirection of hi-rollers and VIPs to ensure they experience an improved level of service, whatever the traffic to the site as a whole.

Online gaming is a highly regulated business, and those regulations vary by geographic region. All eGaming organisations are expected to have a strong sense of the different jurisdiction's requirements. One element of this is to be able to demonstrate the ability to block traffic from territories where gaming is prohibited, such as the US. When utilising Zeus software, the customer is able to identify this traffic and apply the correct compliance and regulation rules. "Zeus software provides a powerful set of business tools, and working with Ardenta means we can call upon their gaming expertise to apply these tools to the gaming market," says Owen Garrett, product manager, Zeus Technology.

Recent research from Microsoft shows that injecting a two-second delay into a page load for a web application resulted in a 4.5% drop in revenues. This demonstrates the importance of response times; as soon as customers experience a delay it starts to directly impact revenues. Customer loyalty is very difficult to secure in eGaming: Zeus software allows eGaming organisations to optimise their IT environment and improve the overall gaming experience.

In addition to improved customer experience and therefore improved customer retention, Zeus software also enables eGaming organisations to identify and prioritise their most desirable customers. It enables the capture of data which identifies not only where the high-value customers come from, but also what type of device they are using. The content can be customised to match the device they are using, whether their customer is browsing on a PC or on a mobile phone. The ability to operate competently in a virtual environment is also becoming increasingly

## What customers are saying

"Customers are increasingly interacting with our platform, spending more time and money on our site. While this is great for business, it also means that our community expects a reliable online experience with no outages during games or transactions. Our huge growth rate resulted in 1.61bn hits on pkr.com, so it is critical that we have the robust and scalable technology. Zeus manages this huge volume of web traffic. We are confident with Zeus' enterprise-level software in place that we have a reliable, 100% available, online presence providing an excellent user experience."

*Jeremy Longley, CTO, PKR.com*



important in the industry. Online gaming is a global, 24/7 business that necessitates very quick changes, and Zeus can enable gaming companies to rapidly develop, test and deploy new applications or provide updates to existing applications with no downtime.

#### Improved system performance

There is one distinct characteristic of online gaming which has been a headache for online gaming companies historically. The nature of the business involves major fluctuations in betting volumes, associated with major sporting events, which does not necessarily sit well with traditional IT systems. Whether it is the run-up to the Grand National, the Melbourne cup or other major betting events, the website will experience significant increases in traffic, sometimes rising by 400-500%. The flexibility to instantly respond to peaks in demand is key: by provisioning new capacity the site is able to cope with these peaks and the customer experiences no reduction in service. This solution can be deployed cost-effectively on any infrastructure platform, including physical, virtual or cloud environments. They are only paying for what they use, which enables them to provision that extra capacity in the cloud, for example, for a set period of time, and then de-provision it when the demand goes away. Only the capacity used in that set period needs to be purchased. There is no requirement for extra boxes of hardware to put into their data centre, instead the capacity in the cloud can be utilised and turned on or off on demand, which is a very cost efficient solution for the company.

#### Getting closer to the customer

The holy grail for eGaming companies is to be able to treat individual customers differently in real time. This can be achieved by feeding data from a product

such as Zeus into a business intelligence engine and starting predictive analysis on how the customer is likely to behave. This is 'next generation CRM', with marketing offers tailor-made to the customer based upon what they may do in the future. Getting closer to the customer is incredibly important, and involves knowing their transaction history and understanding how they interact with the site itself. Marketing departments want to be able to make these offers based on what the customer might do in the future, rather than just what they have done in the past.

#### Proliferation of markets

There are some significant challenges coming down the line, and one of them is the possibility of US deregulation which would open up an enormous market. This would have a major impact on the industry, and eGaming organisations would need to be able to quickly provision new capacity. To this end, Ardentia offer a 'casino in a box' solution which consists of a pre-configured infrastructure stack that can be plugged straight into a data centre. As this solution provides a virtualised environment, it equips organisations to handle future challenges effectively. Online gaming is also going through major change at the moment in the form of the massive proliferation of markets. In IT terms, this massive explosion of data and the need to deal with this increased demand requires the provisioning of new environments to cope.

Ardentia's focus is to deliver tailor-made solutions to the business units of their customers rather than just acting as technical consultants. Through continuous repositioning they are able to stay aligned to these business objectives. The addition of Zeus software to the portfolio demonstrates commitment to identifying need and providing effective solutions in a rapidly changing landscape. ❖