



Case study

Secure data center and cloud as needed: trans-o-flex and NTT Ltd. leverage a hybrid concept for IT infrastructure

About Trans-o-flex:

Trans-o-flex provides logistics solutions for pharmaceutical products and other high-quality, sensitive goods. This includes temperature-controlled and documented pharmaceutical products shipped throughout Germany in two networks with temperature ranging from of 2 - 8 degrees and 15 - 25 degrees Celsius.

Where would a logistics service provider like trans-o-flex be without a functioning IT infrastructure? At peak periods in the early morning, when all their vehicles are loaded, up to 7,000 users access its logistics applications.

Until 2018, the company operated its own on-premises data center in Weinheim but over time, the requirements for security, reliability, and performance could no longer be met. As a result, the company developed a hybrid cloud strategy, tested this set-up and implemented their new data center solution all within a year.

Today, the heartbeat of trans-o-flex is safely hosted in NTT Ltd.'s data center in Frankfurt where in case of any emergencies, there is always a direct connection to the Oracle Cloud.

Client requirements

Detailed IT-supported planning and process controls are essential for success. The requirements for IT reliability and performance are correspondingly high. And this is precisely where they reached their limits. The on-premises data center could no longer meet enhanced security requirements.

A corresponding cloud strategy couldn't be implemented from Weinheim due to the lack of an adequate network connection and because it would have been too expensive. For Stefan Fuss, Head of System Architecture at trans-o-flex IT Service GmbH, the solution was obvious.

Rather than operate an on-premises data center in Weinheim, trans-o-flex looked for a suitable co-location provider in Frankfurt with direct access to the necessary internet nodes and cloud access points.

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‘Once the dark fiber connection was up, the results were really impressive. There was no noticeable difference between the systems at NTT Ltd. and working with our own data center. With latency of just over one millisecond to the cloud, we’re talking almost real-time.’

Stefan Fuss, Head of System Architecture

A solution presents itself

As a result of positive experiences on previous projects, trans-o-flex turned to NTT Ltd., who were able to cost-effectively provide secure tier 3 data center facilities. Part of the overall co-location solution was to transfer the entire trans-o-flex data center from Weinheim to leased space within our data center. A disaster recovery solution was also required for emergencies. One initial option would have been to mirror all their applications, including their Oracle databases. However, this option would have doubled their licensing costs. The alternative consisted of hosting all the disaster recovery systems in the Oracle Cloud. In the event of an emergency, the connections would be activated automatically, and the additional resources would then become available.

Given the scope of the decision, Fuss opted to play it safe and test the solution first but within a live operating environment. Ordinarily, they would have had to lease and configure servers and connections, costing time and money.

We offered them a quicker and more cost-effective alternative by using our Technology Experience Lab. More than 150 partners and five start-ups make their products and services available in this secure environment with the partners available to advise, collaborate and help implement new solutions.

For trans-o-flex, this provided the ideal point to launch a proof-of-concept. The company was provided with Oracle testing licenses and it leased a dark fiber connection from our data center to the Oracle Cloud and set up all its production databases in the cloud.

After clearing all the initial work involved for design, setup, and implementation, they then proceeded to analyse the performance of the applications in the Technology Experience Lab along with that of their databases.

After successful tests in summer 2018, the system went live in December 2018. The company had to implement its disaster recovery strategy when they needed to move their production environment to the Oracle Cloud for two and a half weeks. During this time, IT operations were relocated to Frankfurt and put into operation there.

As Fuss explains: ‘Collaborating with NTT Ltd. was straightforward right from the start. We quickly had a slot in the Technology Experience Lab, were provided with all the support you can imagine, and our IT has worked smoothly since it was commissioned.’