



Success Brief

Intel® Xeon® processor
7400 series
Financial Services



“The Intel® Xeon® processor 7400 series optimises our energy efficiency on an ongoing basis and uses much less space to deliver results.”

Marko Djukic,
Head of Infrastructure,
Aspect Capital Limited

Investing in Success

Company	Aspect Capital Limited
Product evaluated	Intel® Xeon® processor 7400 series
Challenge	An investment management firm needed a robust, energy-efficient and powerful IT architecture to support upgraded mission-critical research and analysis applications based on Sun Solaris* 10 operating system.
Results	A significant performance increase over the previous server platform resulted in 80 percent energy savings while enabling consolidation of the Sun environment to fewer servers.
Impact	A more consolidated server environment increases resource availability and simplifies management, driving business performance. Improved control of CPU core use enables more effective management of energy usage, driving power and cost efficiency.
Next steps	Aspect purchased the evaluation platform to continue receiving benefits in its IT environment. The company also plans to invest in additional Intel® technology to support other areas of the business.

Challenge

A London-based systematic investment manager, Aspect Capital Limited (Aspect) is responsible for managing approximately USD 4 billion. With a client base that includes many of the world's leading institutional investors, the company is dedicated to generating returns from global futures and currency markets. Facing a market landscape that can change significantly in the course of a single day, the ability to handle information speedily and reliably is crucial to success.

Aspect's team of financial experts relies heavily on a number of trading applications that enable detailed numeric research of current and emerging trends. A strong and reliable IT architecture is essential to making sure these applications continue to run at their optimum level.

Deployment

A key requirement for Aspect was that its new IT architecture matched the needs of its mission-critical applications, which were designed to run on the Sun Solaris* 10 operating system. It therefore turned to BSI, an IT services consultancy specialising in Sun environments for financial services organisations, to recommend a suitable replacement for its Sun SPARC platform.

After considering a number of options outlined by BSi, Aspect chose to evaluate a Sun Fire* X4450 server powered by four Intel® Xeon® processors 7400 series with six cores each. Marko Djukic, head of infrastructure at Aspect, explains why he and his team made this choice: "The sheer CPU core density of the hardware was very compelling. We weren't able to get that in such a small form factor from any other solution we looked at. We were also impressed by the way the Sun and Intel technologies worked together to achieve optimum performance and results, like enhanced access to memory and improved I/O to the chip. The seamless compatibility of the software and firmware made the platform easy to deploy too."

Running Solaris 10 on the platform, Djukic and his team set up and ran various zones and instances on one server to carry out a thorough evaluation, which lasted for about three months.

Results

The evaluation Aspect carried out on the Intel® Xeon® processor 7400 series-based platform running its core applications showed a significant increase in performance. This resulted in 80 percent savings in energy used and a correspondingly significant improvement in response speed.

Aspect was also able to consolidate its IT environment by creating the same number of instances on a smaller number of servers, thanks to the increased performance of the Intel® technology-based platform. This, in turn, saved energy and made the system easier for the administrative team to use. The space savings achieved through this technology refresh can be compared to condensing two large refrigerators into the space under a desk.

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Impact

"We've found the new architecture to deliver a number of benefits to Aspect, both in the IT department and across the wider business," says Djukic. "Having more Solaris environments and instances to work with means we can deliver smoother workflow for the business. At the same time, less scheduling and better availability of dedicated resources means business process efficiency is further enhanced. This means that our investment experts can get faster results and deeper analysis."

The team of IT administrators at Aspect has noted how much simpler to manage the new platform is, saving them administrative time. The flexibility of the Intel® Xeon® processor 7400 series means that Aspect can easily scale the platform to meet performance demands in real time. "We can utilise all 24 cores at a time, or just half of them, depending on what the applications need," says Djukic. "This enables us to direct performance exactly where it's needed to get the best results and gives us much greater control over our power and space consumption. We can optimise our energy efficiency on an ongoing basis and are using much less space to deliver these results." The lower cost of provisioning a smaller number of servers means Aspect can also expect to save money with the Intel and Sun technology-based platform.



Future

Following the successful evaluation, Aspect purchased the platform it had been testing so that it could continue to underpin the company's consolidated, higher-performance IT environment. "Based on the results we have seen so far, we're confident that we've found the right solution to support our business-critical Sun Solaris environment and applications," concludes Djukic.

The team is already looking to purchase additional Intel technology-based solutions to support other areas of Aspect's business. "We look forward to managing assets for our clients for a long time to come, and expect to continue leveraging Intel technology to achieve this."

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