



CASE STUDY

High Tech Support for New Zealand's Leading Rural Insurer

FMG Implements Actifio to Accelerate Application Development

KEY FACTS

Who: FMG, New Zealand's leading rural insurer

IT Environment: Two data centers, one production and one remote for DR, Azure, Windows, Exchange, Microsoft CRM, SQL, Oracle, Guidewire Insurance Suite, Actifio Sky.

Challenge: Growing application development demands pushed impractical requirements for more production database copies and unaffordable storage growth.

Solution: Installed Actifio Sky, and introduced self-service developer access to production database copies, eliminating excessive storage/time bottlenecks



Executive Summary

FMG business was growing rapidly in service to New Zealand's rural insurance market. Expanded insurance platform developments challenged the scalability of their IT infrastructure. Time and storage constraints put a stop to providing developers and testers with full production database copies. The FMG IT team needed a change in strategy. By implementing Actifio, and integrating with Jenkins automation, they created a self-service portal for developers and testers to refresh a database copy over 1TB in size whenever needed, complete in 10 minutes. Their benefits include improvements in time, space and staff efficiencies and support for accelerated business growth.

 "It's a great platform and we really love it."

 -SHUMIN ZHOU—DATABASE ADMINISTRATOR AND DEVELOPER

FMG Overview

Started in 1905 by farmers, FMG is now the leading rural insurer in New Zealand. FMG provides advice and insurance to over 85,000 people across 30 offices nationwide. As a mutual, FMG is a different insurer as it's owned by its members. That means profits go back into the Mutual to keep premiums fair and affordable. Without middlemen, FMG's specialized advice helps farmers and growers mitigate and manage their risks with customized insurance cover. It's an organization that understands rural life and the business of farming and is continuously innovating to provide cover that adds real value to the needs of rural communities.

“Sometimes you see something that, at first, seems too good to be true. That was my initial impression of Actifio. I didn’t believe it would perform as advertised. And then it did. Actifio has changed the way we do business.”

—TIM WALES—APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT MANAGER

The Challenge

FMG plans to grow their business from the current 45% market share to a 55% share in New Zealand’s rural insurance market by 2021. In the last five years, FMG gradually replaced its legacy insurance software with a suite of Guidewire insurance products. Guidewire is sophisticated insurance software and service platform that FMG uses to manage their business, optimize operations and standardize core processes. However, soon after the initial installment of Guidewire insurance products, they experienced capabilities and scalability challenges to provide the ever expanding requirements for more development environments. They had been accustomed to providing developers and testers with full copies of the production database (DB) with the database administrator (DBA) responding to refresh requests on-demand. However, as their production databases continue to grow, they began having difficulty meeting the time and storage demands for many development environments. They were running out of disk space and each database refresh could take up to 2 hours. They had to create a calendar to track who would have access to an environment on a given day. It became clear they couldn’t give development and testing teams the full database copies they required to support the software improvements demanded by the business. So, rather than expand storage and add expensive support resources, they decided it was time for a new approach. In consultation with their IT support provider, Spectrum, they began looking at Actifio.

“FMG has seen massive growth over the last few years. If we were still operating under the old model, that growth wouldn’t have been possible.”

—TIM WALES—APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT MANAGER

A New Strategy

The FMG team began testing and assessing Actifio Sky for their requirements. They needed time to understand how the platform worked and testing was initially difficult until they gained access to direct Actifio support. “We needed their help to get it right,” said Tim. “But once we got it right, it took away all the pain points. It completely changed the landscape for us and we never looked back.”

Guidewire insurance products are heavily dependent on their database. FMG development and test teams required production database copy to conduct meaningful tests. That was particularly true during a recent platform version upgrade. It’s a major undertaking and required considerable effort from the test and development teams. With Actifio in place, the teams were able to run old and new software versions simultaneously, each developer and tester could have multiple sets of production database copies.

It simplified regression testing and helped to validate how changes worked in both versions. The upgrade project represented 40+ environments with each accessing 1TB of virtual data. "Having Actifio has improved the quality of development," said Tim. "It's made our teams much more self-sufficient."

Using Actifio's comprehensive API support, FMG has also integrated Jenkins open source automation to create an automated continuous integration and continuous delivery (CI/CD) portal. Developers and testers have self-service access to refresh a database whenever needed. And, what used to be a 2-hour process now completes in 10 minutes.

"Because we are making improvements to our insurance system all the time, Actifio helps us accelerate our development and test cycles, benefitting our business hugely from these continuous improvements. "

—SHUMIN ZHOU—**DATABASE ADMINISTRATOR AND DEVELOPER**

FMG benefits:

- Database refresh reduced from 2 hours to 10 minutes – 90% faster.
- Huge decrease on storage requirement. Actifio provides nearly 50Tb of database clones with only 2Tb of actual disk space used.
- Actifio's ability to provide virtual database clones quickly and efficiently means that FMG can provide as many database copies as required without straining its datacenter.
- During their recently complex Guidewire insurance system upgrade, they were able to provide environments for both old and new versions for extensive testing with ease.
- Utilize Actifio's APIs to enable a fully self-serviced database refresh portal for developers and testers.
- Increased development environments from 10 to 40+.
- Expanded their software development capabilities.
- Support for accelerated business growth.

About Actifio

Actifio virtualizes the data that's the lifeblood of businesses in more than 35 countries around the world. Its Virtual Data Pipeline™ technology enables businesses to manage, access, and protect their data faster, more efficiently, and more simply by decoupling data from physical storage, much the same way a hypervisor decouples compute from physical servers. For enterprise-class backup modernization, self-serve instant data access, or service provider business transformation, Actifio is the first and only enterprise class copy data virtualization platform.

For additional information, visit Actifio at www.actifio.com or contact Actifio at info@actifio.com or **855.886.8997**.

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