

CASE STUDY

Experticity Chooses GridGain Solution for Real-Time Customer Analytics

GridGain In-Memory Data Fabric Selected after Meeting Stringent Performance and Scalability Requirements

**CHALLENGE**

Experticity is the industry's largest community of influential experts that drive retail sales and create premier buying experiences. They needed an in-memory solution to distribute compute jobs across servers in order to meet its real-time performance requirements.

SOLUTION

After evaluating several open source solutions, the company chose the GridGain In-Memory Data Fabric, an advanced, high-performance data access and processing system.

BENEFITS

- With GridGain, Experticity is able to analyze data in real-time so users are moved seamlessly to the next step in the personalized process, delivering relevant results and analytics rapidly and meticulously to its members and brand clients.
- With GridGain, Experticity is running computations closer to the data, which ensures accuracy.
- With the GridGain In-Memory Data Fabric in place, Experticity will scale seamlessly to meet its anticipated growth by simply adding servers.

Salt Lake City-based Experticity focuses on connecting over 650 lifestyle and consumer brands with key brand advocates to help them improve sales in their retail channels. Brands utilize the network to identify advocates who are having the conversations that matter in their sales channel and engage them through digital certification and product seeding campaigns. Experticity has seeded over 4.5 million products and delivered over 49 million digital educational certifications.

BRANDED FOR SUCCESS

In order to provide its brand clients with detailed content targeting and analytics, Experticity builds profiles of each member within their network that gives visibility into their interests, experience, content and purchase interactions. This information becomes valuable to clients like GoPro, New Balance and The North Face to help them build and measure campaigns across the network.

"Experticity works with several of the industry's largest and most innovative global consumer brands," said Jeremy Knudsen, CTO of Experticity. "We are always challenging ourselves to deliver solutions that can effectively help brands connect with the individuals who can help increase sell-through of their products in retail."

To analyze the data quickly enough to send users to the next logical step in the personalized process, and deliver analytics information accurately and in real-time to the ever-changing data collection, Experticity needed a mechanism that would scale to the growth it knew it would face – and has faced over time.

"We needed to replace a legacy system that would not be able to grow with us, and after doing some research, we decided to look into an in-memory data grid solution," said Knudsen. "Our priority was to find a solution that would scale horizontally and meet our growth needs – one that would enable us to simply add servers to support customers and end users. Secondly, we had two specific performance requirements: We needed users to be able to interact in real-time with the grid and have the system run computations as the user completes an activity or updates their profile. Lastly, we run a fairly complex analysis against a very large audience – several thousand people at any given time – and we needed the solution to support that as well as our expected growth."

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— Jeremy Knudsen,
Chief Technology Officer,
Experticity

Experticity analyzed in-memory data grid solutions from GridGain alongside other open source technology solutions. After testing each solution, GridGain was the only one that met all of the company's requirements. "Next, to be certain about the scalability, we did a test with an average load as well as expected future load and liked what we saw," said Knudsen. "GridGain was only available as a commercial product at the time [note: today it is open source], and as a company, we rarely choose commercial solutions. But we did – we chose GridGain because of how well it delivered the results we were looking for. And we like the fact that it went open source since, so the decision to deploy GridGain turned out to be a really good one."



In summary, Knudsen said, “After evaluating several solutions, we chose the GridGain In-Memory Data Fabric because it was the most advanced solution meeting one hundred percent of our needs.”

PERFORMANCE FOR REAL-TIME ANALYTICS

The GridGain In-Memory Data Fabric integration process was straightforward and seamless, according to Knudsen. “The deployment was quite smooth. We were comfortable throughout the process, partly due to the fact that we spent a good amount of time during the due diligence, but the solution itself was also relatively straightforward.”

The GridGain In-Memory Data Fabric, an advanced data access and processing system now available as an open source distribution, provides Experticity with in-memory caching, distributed computing, and streaming. The integrated solution addresses performance, scalability, availability and reliability for Experticity. When a user triggers an event, such as downloading a piece of content, taking a training course, buying discounted merchandise, or rating their product preferences, this data is sent directly to the GridGain In-Memory Data Fabric, where algorithms are run directly on the nodes of the grid.

“We need it to work fast and work at scale, and GridGain does. We couldn’t do what we do without GridGain, and we’re confident we can scale to meet the growth we anticipate.”

— Jeremy Knudsen, Chief Technology Officer, Experticity

According to Knudsen, that’s when the real work gets done and the magic happens. Data is fed directly into the GridGain In-Memory Data Fabric and brands cull rich insights from the analytics derived from that data. Throughout the process of collecting the data on each user – thousands of which can be answering questions simultaneously – there is a constant need to reanalyze the data as it continuously changes. Even as users move through the process, as those thousands of users answer questions and move on, Experticity is powering the experience and each experience is unlocking new opportunities for every user.

“We are big fans of GridGain. It’s been several months in production. It’s stable and fast and everything we expected it to be.”

— Jeremy Knudsen, Chief Technology Officer, Experticity

This means one thing: Performance is key. “We need it to work fast and work at scale, and GridGain does,” said Knudsen. “We couldn’t do what we do without GridGain, and we’re confident we can scale to meet the growth we anticipate.”

SALES CONNECTION SUCCESS

According to Knudsen, brands know that influencing buying conversations is critical to getting their product to sell in today’s marketplace. But historically, there have been very few measurable channels to effectively target and engage individuals that either sell their product in retail or interact with their target consumers within their industry. “By forming long-term, high-value relationships, brands see better results, experts are rewarded for their knowledge and consumers have better buying experiences,” he said. “With our analytics and the performance of the GridGain In-Memory Data Fabric, we help them achieve this. That’s invaluable.”

Experticity is more than pleased with its choice of GridGain to support its real-time analytics platform. “As we increase our capacity and build our business, GridGain will be a part of our growth given they are a key part of our technology. The product we have meets our needs one hundred percent and we’re happy with it.”

Every company needs to ensure its systems can withstand a storm, so according to Knudsen, “We’ve gone through disaster scenarios to kill off half our cluster and GridGain just keeps doing what it’s supposed to do.” Knudsen appreciates GridGain’s decision to open source its solution. “The solution is very competitive with what’s out there and we [as a company] might even contribute to the project, which is great for us as a business.”

“We are big fans of GridGain. It’s been several months in production. It’s stable and fast and everything we expected it to be,” concluded Knudsen.

ABOUT EXPERTICITY

Experticity helps brands and retailers influence the conversations that influence what people buy – leading to increased sales and happier, more loyal customers. The company does this through product education and incentive programs that build expertise and brand advocacy in both sales associates and industry professionals. By fostering long-term, high-value relationships, manufacturers see better results, retailers improve performance, experts are rewarded for their knowledge and consumers have better buying experiences. Experticity currently works with over 625 brands, 70,000 retail locations and nearly 1.5 million influential experts. Learn more at www.experticity.com.

ABOUT GRIDGAIN™

GridGain, the leading provider of the open source In-Memory Data Fabric, offers the most comprehensive in-memory computing solution to equip the real-time enterprise with a new level of computing power. Enabling high-performance transactions, real-time streaming and ultra-fast analytics in a single, highly scalable data access and processing layer, GridGain enables customers to predict and innovate ahead of market changes. Fortune 500 companies, top government agencies and innovative mobile and web companies use GridGain to achieve unprecedented computing performance and business insights. GridGain is headquartered in Foster City, California. To download the GridGain In-Memory Data Fabric, please visit <http://www.gridgain.com/download/>.

