We have put data at the center of how we do business by reducing IT maintenance and improving security through the traceability of data processing.

Florent Massiera, Director of Architecture, Digital and Big Data, Infopro Digital

Putting data at the center of our business

Infopro Digital is a French company whose business covers three areas: publisher of professional services (leads platform, industry solutions, sale of databases); trade show organizer; and owner of some sixty B2B publications, including its flagships Le Moniteur (construction and urban planning), LSA (French consumer goods), L’Usine Nouvelle, L’Usine Digitale (manufacturing), and La Gazette des Communes (French public sector.)

Infopro Digital employs 3,300 professionals serving six main industries: insurance/finance, retail, automotive, manufacturing (everything from packaging to chemicals), the public sector, and construction. The group’s sales are at 444 million euros, and it boasts an annual growth of 20% since its founding in 2001.

Giving data a key role in the company strategy

In early 2019, the company set itself a challenge: making data a key component of its business strategy for a more in-depth management of its activities. This was a sizable undertaking, given that the company’s in-house divisions and business units (BUs) each relied on separate databases. In total, there were 400 databases operating as silos.

Moreover, Infopro Digital’s operational infrastructure at the time was not able to run any additional analytics.

“We already had systems in place, but we wanted something more responsive and faster,” explains Florent Massiera, Director of Architecture, Digital and Big Data.

So Massiera decided to go with AWS as a cloud solution and set up a data lake on Amazon S3 linked to a Snowflake data warehouse and fed by Talend through sixty data flows. “We were able to separate the operational databases and the data warehouse to facilitate our analytics project. We upload subscriber data to the warehouse, such as subscription types, or completed purchases,” says Massiera.

The overall goal was to provide sales and marketing teams with increasing levels of quality information that they could use in their own internal analytics. "We wanted to give them aggregated, clean data that met their needs, with everything linked to Tableau Software (the data visualization tool for the data warehouse) so that they could use the data autonomously," he explains.

During the technical roll out, it took only ten days to transfer the first database. “The transfer involved one of our data repository, which contained an entire list of all companies in France,” says Project Head Cédric Pasminski. "Looking back, we didn't pick the simplest one for the start. The source database had a complex structure that we had to transform in multiple ways for the target database in Snowflake."

Why Talend?

Despite the challenges, the integration went very well. "We chose Talend because they offer the simplest solution for extracting, transforming, and then feeding the data into our warehouse. Talend easily interfaces with Snowflake," explains Pasminski.

It was a natural choice to go with Talend. Infopro Digital was already running Talend

INDUSTRY
• Services/Media

INFORMATION
• HQ: France
• 1,001-5,000 employees

USE CASE
• Marketing and sales efficiency

CHALLENGE
• Giving data a key role in the company strategy

TALEND PRODUCT USED
• Talend Cloud Data Management

RESULTS
• Monthly gains in productivity and speed with access to data as a service
solutions in-house for its database of French companies. Talend had already been tasked multiple times with keeping this crucial list up to date, feeding it information culled from many sources, correlations, and management rules, such as inactive companies, new companies, and changes of address or management. Infopro Digital also uses Talend to integrate its various systems, to manage external data, to update the company's databases, and to facilitate migration processes.

“We've been satisfied with Talend’s services for over a decade. The choice was obvious,” says Massiera.

He quickly became aware of the first concrete benefit from this new collaboration with Talend. In the past, data extraction requests took up a lot of IT’s time. “Now, it is truly as a service,” adds Pasminski.

**Better management of subscribers in accordance with the GDPR**

Talend and the data warehouse mean that the business units can now connect datasets previously set up as silos. Take the subscription BU: the unit can now track actual subscriber consumption by connecting the subscriber database with data related to their behavior (how many times subscribers accessed a site, completed product purchases, etc.).

Connecting information between databases also generates operational indicators, such as: Are there enough ads per industry? Is there a need to approach companies, and in which regions? These might seem like simple questions, but it was impossible to answer them previously when Excel was the only tool being used for analysis.

“There were too many industries and too many levels of data and Excel couldn’t handle the correlations,” explains Pasminski.

In an effort to comply with Europe's new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Infopro Digital is working with Talend to integrate all databases containing user information. The goal is to provide the Data Protection Officer with an overview of all data so that he knows immediately which databases contain user information, and then makes deletions as needed, such as when a user asserts her or his right to be forgotten as per the GDPR.

This way Infopro Digital's business units can understand how thousands of professionals use the company's tools and can identify future customers or suppliers, but all in accordance with the GDPR.