

Customer Case Study: Kingland Systems

Critical Issue

For both stockbrokers and the auditors who vigilantly monitor them, computer system downtime resulting in unavailable data or applications could trigger a major crisis. Systems must be continuously available. Making sure they are is Kingland Systems' stock in trade. If Kingland is unable to meet its SLA obligations to keep systems up and running it can cost the company more than \$160,000 per instance.

Results

- Ensured essential capability to deliver core business services
- Dramatic cost savings through avoidance of SLA payments
- Guarantee of continuous availability of clients' mission-critical systems
- Rigorous testing that validates the success of Assure MIMIX HA
- Peace of mind

Technologies

- Assure MIMIX HA
- Kingland Systems Financial Services Software Solutions
- Production Data Center: Clear Lake, Iowa
- Remote Backup Data Center: Lake Mills, Iowa

Company Name:

Kingland Systems Corporation

Headquarters:

Clear Lake, Iowa, USA

Industry:

Financial Services Software and Data Center Hosting

Employees:

60

Business Environment:

- Leading provider of financial systems software and data center services for both brokerages and auditing firms
- Nearly 9,000 brokers, 65,000 audit firms, partners and accounting professionals and one million individual investors use Kingland Systems solutions
- Transaction Volume: 50 million database transactions daily
- Processes \$23 to \$30 billion (US) worth of transactions per month
- SLA-based business model, in which neither natural disasters nor "system issues" exempt the company from its SLA commitments

Implementation Team:

Precisely

Precisely Products:

Assure MIMIX HA

Business Challenge

Kingland Systems' primary data center is located in Clear Lake, Iowa. It also maintains a hot-standby backup site in Lake Mills, Iowa, about 31 miles away. That's far enough so that a natural disaster that strikes one center would almost certainly not affect the other, particularly since the two centers are in different weather zones.

To help guarantee that at least one data center always has electricity, the two sites are on separate power grids provided by different power companies. Network connections are also protected by different communications paths so that at least one site can always connect to the outside world. Moreover, Kingland's primary and backup sites are connected by a microwave link that would be available even if there were a problem with the company's telecommunications supplier. As an added protection, the microwave link is backed up with a fiber-optic link supplied by a telecom firm.

Clearly, with such robust redundancy built in, the company's hardware and networking infrastructure is well protected. The primary business challenge now was to protect the vital data and applications that Kingland Systems hosted for clients in its data center.

Solution

When Kingland Systems searched for a high availability solution, the company quickly realized Assure MIMIX HA was the right choice. Proven performance in other companies, along with the solution's capabilities and price, easily tipped the scales in favor of Assure MIMIX HA.

Kingland Systems was also impressed with Syncsort's willingness to act as a true partner.

"One of our financial applications runs offshore in the Cayman Islands," explained Jeff Gorball, Senior Vice President of Operations, Kingland Systems. "We were looking for a partnership with an availability supplier who could help us there. Precisely had a lot of experience in the international realm and was interested in assuming that kind of full partnership with us."

Assure MIMIX HA maintains near real-time replicas of Kingland's critical data, applications and system objects. It also constantly monitors system functions and automatically switches users to a backup system in case of sudden production system failure. In addition, Kingland can conveniently switch users to the backup system when a primary system must be shut down for scheduled maintenance or upgrades, providing truly continuous operations.

To help guarantee that Kingland always fulfills its SLA commitments, Assure MIMIX HA replicates the data and applications of the firm's high availability service customers. Consequently, the backup site is always up-to-date, ready to assume the full business volume of customers' systems on a moment's notice.

How does Kingland Systems know that Assure MIMIX HA really works to protect against system downtime? There really is only one way to be sure. Kingland regularly and rigorously tests the solution. They can completely switch their customers to the backup system in just a few minutes, a time well within SLA requirements. In addition, Kingland Systems switches data center services from its primary site to its backup site to thoroughly test its disaster recovery and business continuity capabilities on a monthly basis. Because business activity is slower on weekends and would not provide a meaningful test, the company performs switch tests during the business week, when full business volumes are running on the systems.

"We wouldn't be able to provide the level of business continuity that we offer without a means to do data replication," noted Gorball. "Part of our revenue stream just wouldn't exist without the capabilities of Assure MIMIX HA. And, given the importance of availability in our industry, it would be difficult to attract customers without it."

"When it comes right down to it, when we purchased Assure MIMIX HA, we purchased business continuity."

– Jeff Gorball, Senior Vice President of Operations Kingland Systems