

Old Mutual Banks on Attachmate EXTRA! for Windows Vista Compatibility

EXTRA! X-treme's seamless Office integration boosts user productivity



One of the leading financial services providers in South Africa, Old Mutual (SA) holds a prominent position in the industry. This is reflected by its strong operating performance across lines of business, balance sheet position, financial flexibility, access to international capital markets, and diversity of business.

The company's partnership with Nedbank and Mutual & Federal allows Old Mutual [<http://www.oldmutual.co.za/>] to offer a variety of financial products and services for investment, life insurance, asset management, banking, healthcare, and general insurance. Based in Pinelands, South Africa, Old Mutual is committed to delivering value to its clients.

Migration to Windows Vista created need for new terminal emulation solution

Technology plays a major strategic role within the Old Mutual organization. The IT team includes about 750 people, with 400 in application development roles. The company is now migrating users from Microsoft® Windows® 2000 to the Windows Vista® operating system.

A long time Attachmate customer, Old Mutual has used EXTRA!® terminal emulation solutions in its environment for over a decade.

"We're in the process of moving to newer technologies and we needed to make sure that our terminal emulation would be compatible with the latest operating systems," explained Dr. Tiko Iyamu, an IT Architect in the CIO Office of Old Mutual. "The older version of EXTRA! is not compatible, so it was time to upgrade," he said.

Old Mutual made the decision to stay with Attachmate solutions rather than switch vendors. "It is very important to go with the vendor we've worked with for years," said Iyamu. "Some of the rationale include EXTRA!'s user friendly interface, so we are moving ahead with Attachmate."

Choosing a solution to complement Old Mutual's strategy

After researching product upgrade strategies with Attachmate's technical team, Old Mutual made the decision to continue with the EXTRA! product line, choosing EXTRA! X-treme™. From a technical perspective, upgrading ensures that Old Mutual has access to high levels of technical support, if and when it is needed.

QUICK VIEW

Problem

With a Vista migration strategy underway, Old Mutual needed a terminal emulation solution that was compatible with new technologies. It was also important to find a solution that would integrate with Office applications—and minimize user training.

Solution

EXTRA! X-treme provided:

- Windows Vista Certification
- Tools for enhancing user productivity
- Seamless integration with Office applications
- Support for SSL/TLS, Secure Shell (SSH), and Kerberos

Results

- Familiar Office tools improve user productivity
- No re-training required
- Easy upgrade to new version, no business interruption
- Assisted in smooth migration to new operating system

EXTRA! X-treme v9 is built to safeguard data in motion, boost user productivity, and make reliable connections from any desktop to any host. The first application Certified for Windows Vista, EXTRA! X-treme provides seamless integration with Microsoft Office. This means users can access all their familiar Office productivity features from within the EXTRA! X-treme framework.

"We didn't have to go through the problem of deciding which solution to choose," explained Iyamu. "EXTRA! X-treme is one of the applications Certified for Windows Vista, so it is a key product for Old Mutual. EXTRA! complements our desktop strategy," he added.

The roll-out of EXTRA! X-treme lasted about three months, and was managed in phases. "At the head office, where we have 3,000 users, EXTRA! was quite easy to deploy," said Iyamu. At the branch level, the IT team managed deployment more slowly, using

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both remote and physical deployments to accommodate bandwidth issues in the different branches. “We had lots of support from the Attachmate team during the rollout,” added Iyamu.

Securing data in motion with standards and best practices

Old Mutual's staff handles financial services and banking management for its customers. “We have four layers of security, starting with best practices,” said Iyamu. National security standards, organization-specific standards, and access protection are also part of the security program.

EXTRA! provides maximum security when accessing valuable legacy host data. Both the EXTRA! emulation client and the Reflection Secure FTP client, included with EXTRA!, support SSL/TLS, Secure Shell (SSH), and Kerberos.

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Compatibility with Office applications important for productivity

More than 5,500 people use EXTRA! terminal emulation to access the legacy mainframe applications, databases, and in-house applications at the company.

As part of the migration to Windows Vista, Old Mutual is also moving to Office 2007. “Office 2003 has been very important to the organization, so we wanted to make sure there was a smooth transition to Office 2007,” said Iyamu.

EXTRA! X-treme, with its seamless integration with Microsoft Office, fit well with Old Mutual's plans. It makes Office productivity tools—Spell Check, Auto Expand, Auto Complete, Recent Typing, and Scratch Pad—available to users within their legacy host application sessions, and also lets users integrate legacy host data into Outlook e-mail messages and Word documents.

Iyamu said, “our ‘super users’ [developers and system administrators] are already using these new features. Several have talked about the integration with the Microsoft Office Suite and are fascinated by how it works.”

So far, the Old Mutual staff has given EXTRA! very positive responses. “Users have said the new version is friendly and even easier to use than the old version,” said Iyamu, “and some of our ‘super-users’ liked EXTRA!'s increased functionality. It makes work more efficient.”



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