



Case Study

**Quad-Core Intel® Xeon®
Processor 5300 Series**
Financial Services
Transaction Management
Efficiency



Powering Financial Services

Kuo Hua Life Insurance uses Intel quad-core processors to shoulder the load of its expanding eBusiness services

Kuo Hua Life Insurance (Kuo Hua Life) is a forward-looking Taiwan insurance company that recognizes the important role of technology in managing its business. Over the past 45 years of its history, the company has turned to technology to serve its needs in operating an efficient business. To better serve its customers, Kuo Hua Life has expanded its range of electronic services for its customers. The resultant growth eBusiness volume resulted in the company upgrading its server infrastructure to manage higher loads on its IT infrastructure. To manage this better, Kuo Hua Life turned to a high performance server platform powered by Quad-Core Intel® Xeon® processor 5300 series to meet its needs.

“Quad-Core Intel® Xeon processor-based servers are ideal for multiplexing processes, enabling us to optimize data processing and utilize our hardware to the fullest.”

Hung Chieh An
IT Manager
Kuo Hua Life Insurance

Challenge

- **Increase processor power.** Kuo Hua Life needed a more powerful server system to handle the increase in its eBusiness activities.
- **Maximize IT resource uptime and security.** Achieve better return on investment (ROI) through a framework for better control and maintenance of resources.

Solution

- **Deploy quad-core processor platform.** Upgrade server systems to run on Quad-Core Intel® Xeon® processor 5300 series as the core technology to build up the platform.
- **Utilize server virtualization.** Make use of virtualization software to take advantage of Intel quad-core processor technology to maximize and fully utilize processor hardware.

Impact

- **Expanded services.** Enabled range of eBusiness services and availability 24 hours a day with robust reliability and minimal downtime.
 - **Future proofing.** Scalability of the deployed Intel architecture means Kuo Hua Life is able to maximize its investment at today's prices for the future.
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Kuo Hua Life chose Quad-Core Intel® Xeon® processors to obtain the highest level of performance versus cost for its business operations

Kuo Hua Life has a 45-year history which reads like a history of IT development. Kuo Hua Life was the first company in Taiwan to use laptops as a sales tool in the life insurance market. Now they are the first company to deploy servers based on Quad-Core Intel® Xeon® processors to make waves in the ecommerce arena. How does Kuo Hua Life turn high performance computing capabilities based on powerful server solutions into business advantages?

Kuo Hua Life strives to be first in customer satisfaction. Their motto has always been to "Focus on people, put the customer first". In addition to being a pioneer in taking the insurance industry towards the electronic age, Kuo Hua Life is also the first company in Asia to be ISO9001 Quality certified, and the first to undergo ISO27001 certification.

With the growth of eBusiness volume, server volumes must grow too

Kuo Hua Life currently has more than 90 offices and over 3,500 employees in Taiwan. The eBusiness division was set up in 2000 and began by building an

enterprise website which provides search and interactive services for customers. At the time, there was a strong push towards the consolidation of financial services within the country. Kuo Hua Life took the opportunity and aggressively expanded its range of electronic services for their consumer and enterprise customers.

In the fourth quarter of 2005, Kuo Hua Life rolled out their ecommerce platform, and within a short period of time, experienced rapid growth in business volume. Revenue from the ecommerce division grew from NTD 50 to 60 million to more than NTD 120 million. The website receives more than 200,000 hits on a weekly basis while data traffic amounts to between 15 GB and 25 GB. As can be seen, the growth of the ecommerce division has been exponential.

With the continued growth of their online business, there is a need to improve their network infrastructure, information processing capabilities, search response times and web security. In addition, with plans to take the Web Mail Server and storage servers online, a comprehensive upgrade solution was needed. Kuo Hua Life began to research methods by which they could optimize bandwidth, speed and processor usage.

"Our biggest worry is that as the load increases, data might be lost if something were to happen to the server", says Hung Chieh An, IT manager of Kuo Hua Life. The biggest challenge for any ecommerce system is guaranteeing system uptime, and also having an execution plan that can ensure disaster recovery within the shortest time possible.

Based on the recommendations of consultants from CGS International, the IT division at Kuo Hua Life decided to roll out a solution that incorporates server virtualization. They quickly realized that their existing server hardware would not be able to shoulder the required load and needed an upgrade. Kuo Hua Life Insurance began their testing using IBM servers



Spotlight on Kuo Hua Life Insurance

- Kuo Hua Life was incorporated in 1963 and is one of the leading life insurance companies in Taiwan offering a full range of benefit programs to almost 13,460 clients, from multinational companies to small groups.
- Kuo Hua Life has 20 branch offices and 82 agencies and is the first Asian life insurance company to be awarded the ISO-9001 certificate for quality management.
- The company provides term life, accidental death and dismemberment, occupational hazard term life and cancer insurance, as well as dread disease insurance.



“Embracing new technology is not a risk as long as it is thoroughly tested before deployment. This ensures that the roll-out is stress-free, and benefits us with the increased efficiency and improved performance that the Quad-Core Intel Xeon processors make possible.”

Hung Chieh An
IT Manager
Kuo Hua Life Insurance

based on Quad-Core Intel® Xeon® processors. They found that the configuration not only ran the virtualization software smoothly, the performance attainable was astonishing. Based on the test results, Kuo Hua Life proceeded to acquire servers based on Quad-Core Intel® Xeon® processors without hesitation.

Quad-Core Intel® Xeon® processors power servers for high performance, multi-functional usage

Hung says that “Quad-Core Intel® Xeon® processor-based servers are ideal for multiplexing processes and enable highly optimized hardware processing, enabling us to fully utilize our hardware.”

As their online business continues to expand, the ecommerce division at Kuo Hua Life will also continue to acquire more server hardware each year. When it comes to their IT sourcing policy, Hung explains, “We believe in investing only in cutting edge technology, and on hardware that can truly make a difference to the business. With ecommerce as a driving force, the emphasis is on servers that can operate uninterrupted, 24 hours a day, processing data reliably and instantaneously. Security should be also at the forefront. We also need high performance in a small footprint. The servers based on Quad-Core Intel® Xeon® processors deliver on all the aforementioned fronts.”

Hung also shares his guiding philosophy on price versus performance. Kuo Hua Life Insurance typically requires solutions providers to be involved in extensive testing which can last from three to six months. They test for performance, ease of maintenance, interoperability with existing infrastructure. In addition to cost, these three criteria are integral to the appraisal process of any solution. “Even if a solution is cheaper, as long as it does not deliver the same level of performance, we will not use it,” adds Hung.

“We compile actual data from the tests we perform for savings on bandwidth achievable, and make a projection on the time period before the next upgrade is required. The results of our findings are then presented to the management and taken into consideration for any new acquisition. For example, the recent roll-out of Quad-Core Intel® Xeon® processor-based servers was a first choice decision made after comprehensive testing.”

From a solutions provider’s standpoint, Hung is an IT manager who dares to innovate. Some IT managers are more conservative and slow to accept new technology. This may inadvertently cause them to lose market leadership. Hung, on the other hand, is always on the lookout for competitive advantages that new technology enables.

“I trust the Intel® brand,” says Hung confidently. “I trust that a product brought to market by Intel® would have already gone through extensive testing. Hence I am certain the servers based on Quad-Core Intel® Xeon® processors can deliver new benefits.”

Since testing on the new Quad-Core Intel Xeon processor-based server platform began in the May-June period, Hung has been able to collect tangible data to back his statement. With that, Kuo Hua Life is ready to deploy the new hardware infrastructure once they move to their new office in the Xinyi district. Hung says that “Embracing new technology is not a risk as long as it is thoroughly tested before deployment. This ensures that the roll-out is stress-free, and benefits us with the increased efficiency and improved performance that the Quad-Core Intel® Xeon® processors make possible.”

For Kua Hua Life, the Quad-Core Intel Xeon 5300 processors are the key infrastructure in the company’s benefits-driven strategy to improve computing performance without the increased costs normally associated with higher performance capability. The technology delivers the benefits of “Intel Technology Pillars”, which include:

- **Dynamic resource management** which provides patterns, technologies, and methods that sense the changing flows and demands for infrastructure or storage and can analyze them, as well as the facilities to redirect available processing capacity to maintain transactional performance and meet capacity demands.
- **Data-intensive computing** which proves the infrastructures and architecture patterns for the high-processing capability needed for the most demanding systems. These include specific processing infrastructure capabilities to address different types of application processing.
- **Energy-efficient management** features that provide unique information sensing and capture. Information can be stored and analyzed along with associated processing usage and workload consumption to inform active systems about the run time state of the infrastructure. These features can be harnessed to reduce the likelihood of firmware failures and improve the reliability of IT systems, and produce savings by allowing unused systems to be switched off, or transfer processing capacity to another service, or just closed down.

Make good use of Intel® partners to help select the best server hardware for your enterprise

The IT industry changes constantly. With a continual slew of new products coming to market, it is often difficult for enterprises to keep abreast of all new innovations available. This is where Intel® partners and the consultancy they provide come in." It is important to establish a good working relationship with your solutions provider. The solutions provider can use their industry knowledge to incorporate the unique requirements of your organization into the current best of breed solutions," Hung explains. This particular deployment was rolled out in a time efficient manner thanks to the long term working relationship that Kuo Hua Life formed with

their solutions provider, CGS International. Recommendations from CGS International meant that Kuo Hua Life did not have to waste time evaluating solutions that were not suitable for their needs.

Apart from sharing his experience with the stability and efficiency of the servers based on Quad-Core Intel® Xeon® processors, Hung explains that database compatibility was another reason servers based on Quad-Core Intel® Xeon® processors were selected. In the pursuit of increased performance, it is also important to optimize the databases, and ensure the integrity of the database and its backup. If the technology that the architecture of the new solution is based on is not database friendly, then mere increases in processor speed would not be meaningful, as data access speeds would still not be ideal.

From November of this year to March next year, Kuo Hua Life Insurance will be launching a series of online promotions, such as discounts on interest rates. By using online marketing strategies to foster closer relationships with their customers, Kuo Hua Life Insurance can reduce the workload for counter staff at branches.

"This year alone, the company has enjoyed many benefits brought about by electronic commerce, says Hung." With the assistance of CGS International and our new IBM servers based on Quad-Core Intel® Xeon® processors, we will be able to integrate many more processes online, and improve our customer service level" The improved customer service capabilities brought about by servers based on Quad-Core Intel® Xeon® processors will no doubt bring a brighter future for Kuo Hua Life Insurance.

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