

Infocast employs HKT to Boost Network Performance to meet Next-Gen Demands

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As a solutions provider to the securities industry, speed, security and reliability are crucial concerns for leading Hong Kong financial solutions vendor Infocast.

While the company has successfully provided securities trading solutions to brokerage firms and their client investors for over 18 years, it is facing a fresh challenge in 2014 as a new pilot program that links the Hong Kong and Shanghai stock markets is launched.

In a historic move, Shanghai-Hong Kong Stock Connect offers a new through train for mutual stock market access by investors in the two cities. The pilot program is slated to be launched in late 2014.

For this, as in its other solutions, Infocast has chosen to partner with HKT and has been able to leverage the telco's new Carrier Ethernet 2.0 (CE 2.0) infrastructure to its advantage.

HKT launched CE 2.0 FAST (Finance and Securities Trading) in the latter part of 2014 with a new service that complies with the new standard originated by the global association of leading telecoms providers, the Metro Ethernet Forum.

“The timing of CE 2.0 FAST’s availability is very opportune for us, because it has improved infrastructure just at the time we were planning upgrades,” says Mr. Alex Cheung, Head of Platform Strategy at Infocast.

“The retail brokerage industry is very much looking forward to this mutual access between the Hong Kong and Shanghai exchanges, but beforehand our platform, as well as those servicing the rest of the industry, needs to address the challenges so we can take advantage of this opportunity.

“The most important thing is that the platform has to be stable and fast because our services and solutions for the securities industry, such as providing real-time market information, executing trades and handling order settlement, are mission critical, and reliability has to be absolute.”

Known as InvesTrade, Infocast’s new platform is an integrated trading and market data system that processes high volumes of transactions in a stable and secure manner. It also connects investors in Hong Kong and Shanghai, giving them the ability to trade on both exchanges.

Both markets are implementing mutual order-routing connecting and related infrastructure, which is where Infocast’s InvesTrade solution plays a crucial role.

“With the new InvesTrade platform, the entire service has to be constantly available with minimal down time and all incidents need to be transparent to both the users and the solution providers,” says Alex.

“You also need to have the capability to support a high concentration of InvesTrade client connections, and, of course, these need to be supported reliably without adversely impacting the performance or security.”

The need for multiple connections is another reason why Infocast partnered with HKT and uses CE 2.0 FAST, for which HKT provides 24/7 network monitoring.

“InvesTrade service is deployed using an ASP solution architecture, and there are a lot of customers connecting centrally to our data center, which is housed with HKT as well,” says Alex.

“We need to ensure that all incidents are transparent and mitigated with a carrier-grade network that won’t have any liabilities or issues.

“HKT has been dominant in the market here, with a reputation for stability and reliability. It has also been one of the prominent service providers in online securities trading in Hong Kong. Most of our own brokerage clients use HKT as their primary circuit provider as well.”

In addition to speed and reliability, time-to-market and the ease of upgrade are further advantages of using HKT and CE 2.0 FAST.

“At the back-end where we connect the client to the network, we are able to do a remote upgrade without requiring on-site access to the client’s premises,” says Alex.

“Our clients can migrate to HKT’s CE2.0 FAST very easily. This is good for both of us and the client as it offers a complete solution with less integration effort.”

Beyond InvesTrade, Infocast has plans to expand into the trading of other asset classes, such as forex and commodities, and is also eyeing other markets outside of Hong Kong and Shanghai.

The company is looking to leverage its existing partnership with HKT and their infrastructure for this expansion.

“The new HKT’s CE 2.0 FAST will be able to cope with the requirement for higher bandwidth, which is only going to increase,” says Alex.

“This will be our next challenge, and we believe that HKT is ideally positioned to organically grow their infrastructure to meet our future needs.

“We have been working with HKT for a number of years, and I think we both share the same vision to deploy the best solutions to our end customers.”

The logo for HKT, consisting of the letters 'HKT' in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.

infocast
滙港資訊

The logo for Infocast, featuring a stylized 'i' inside a circle with a red swoosh, followed by the word 'infocast' in a lowercase, italicized font, and the Chinese characters '滙港資訊' below it.