

USING DATA INSIGHTS TO DELIVER PERSONALISED SERVICES, CUSTOM POLICIES AND REDUCE RISK

50%

Reduction in processing time for hundreds of TBs of data

Impact

- Processing hundreds of TBs of data, accelerated speed by 50%
- Reduced response time by 70%
- Single customer view
- Risk mitigation and compliance with GDPR

One of the world's largest insurers, Zurich Insurance Group has been creating and fulfilling insurance products for more than 140 years. Commonly known as Zurich, and headquartered in Zürich, Switzerland, the company operates both globally and locally, with around 55,000 employees serving customers' needs in more than 170 countries.

Insurance companies take many factors into account when estimating risk. They look at lifestyle factors such as smoking and occupation for personal insurance, as well as indicators such as credit scores and financial health, particularly in the case of businesses. In fact, the more data underwriters can work with, the more accurately they are able to calculate risk, design policies and assess claims, as well as produce tailored products, usually on a group or category basis.

Today's connected world has exponentially increased the amount of data that can be used to help insurers assess risk and better understand their customers' needs. This presents a massive business opportunity and Zurich was intent on making the transition from being a passive data collector to becoming an intelligent big data user, able to use data to drive valuable outcomes for its business and customers.

New Data Sources Need New Solutions

With access to massive data sets drawn from numerous different sources – such as vehicle telematics, IoT sensors, and social media – Zurich's main challenge was how to extract value from IoT sensor data and JSON files within the data lake, which were characterized by great variation and complexity. The ability to do this would gain it significant ground against competitors, as they were able to use data to improve risk assessment and create bespoke products for a new generation of customers who expect personalized service offerings that are proactively tailored to specific needs.

"Enhancing the customer experience by enabling the delivery of the right information at the right time all comes down to data and the infrastructure behind it," said José Luis Sánchez, Head of Big Data Operations, Zurich Insurance. "We needed to adopt a big data technology platform to enable us to evolve our services and innovate products; as well as to mitigate the impact of poor risk assessments on the business. With data driven insights, greater accuracy can be delivered across the board, which can ultimately drive more accurate policies and reduce corporate liability."

Single Big Data Solution for Single Customer View

To enable it to establish such a powerful big data strategy, Zurich needed a secure big data solution that would bring flexibility, reliability and speed to the various complex data sets it was working with, enabling visibility into customer behaviour and preferences to keep pace with customer expectations in a fast-changing marketplace.

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Zurich partnered with Cloudera to establish a foundational big data platform which would simplify its overall data architecture. The Cloudera platform provides Zurich with a single, flexible, and secure location where all its external and internal data can be located and curated. Its flexibility gives Zurich the ability to run multiple workloads for different use-cases, both operational and analytical, allowing the insurer to gain the visibility it needs to achieve a single customer view for developing innovation and products.

Furthermore, Zurich gained additional speed and scalability by using Cloudbreak to establish its new big data environment in the cloud with Microsoft Azure infrastructure as a service (IaaS). Zurich can rapidly run data workloads and auto-scale as workload size and activity changes. The solution has not only accelerated the speed to process the data, but also has reduced the response time for new business requirements by 70%.

The company also relies on professional service support provided by Cloudera, and partner Everis, which is critical for the strategic implementation of its big data environment.

“Our established relationship with Cloudera gave us the confidence that they would understand the data architecture we required. Indeed, its strategic counsel was second to none, allowing us to not only achieve a powerful data architecture that could cope with complex, variable data we were working with, but one that took advantage of a scalable cloud environment. Cloudera has given our data the ability to fulfil its potential,” said José Luis Sánchez, Head of Big Data Operations, Zurich Insurance.

Enhancing Customer Experience with Data

This analytics solution is processing hundreds of TBs of data, taking 50% of the time it was before. It also is compliant with the legal requirements across various countries, such as GDPR and the Germany Data Protection Act. This has enabled Zurich to gain granular insight into singular customers, giving more detailed and actionable intelligence than ever before to build customer satisfaction and reduce churn.

It will also have unprecedented knowledge to design its services and policies for the future, ensuring risk is managed and customers receive the most accurate policy for them. What’s more, having much more control and visibility over the data makes compliance far easier and consequently reduces the risk of falling foul of regulations.

“Our big data solution has been truly transformative for Zurich,” says Abhishek Sakhuja, Big Data & Cloud Architect, Everis. “With the way data generation and its processing requirements have changed, dynamic infrastructure has become a necessity for future business success. Cloudera has provided us with the solution we need to meet customer demand in a risk-free way and given us the ability to auto-scale effectively and efficiently on the cloud. The solution has not only enabled us to deliver actionable insights to drive our business strategy but likewise, a better service for all our customers.”