

PHOTOBOX

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

Photobox is a leading e-commerce company that allows you to buy photo prints and personalized gifts. They get spikes in traffic during holiday season and during promotions. With ClustrixDB™, Photobox no longer needed to worry about database performance or capacity.

About Photobox

Photobox is Europe's leading online photo service. The company pioneered online printing, storing, sharing, and publishing services for digital photos before extending its range to innovative products such as photo books, calendars, and greeting cards. Merging with leading French service Photoways in April 2006, PhotoBox now boasts over 11 million members and nearly 200 million photo prints and has won more awards than any other online photo printing website with the latest including *Which?* Magazine's Best Buy and Gartner's CRM Excellence Award. Photobox recently acquired Moonpig.com, the world's largest online personalized greeting card retailer. Founded in 1999, Moonpig.com has almost three million active customers and ships over 12 million cards per year.

Pre-Clustrix

When Photobox first approached Clustrix they had been experiencing continual high growth over the first eleven years of their business existence. They've always been reliant on MySQL as the core database engine of their website operations. Photobox realized that they were going to reach the limits of what a conventional MySQL master/slave replication chain could give them in terms of performance and reliability. When they first began the search for an alternative solution, they knew they had less than a year of conventional capacity left.

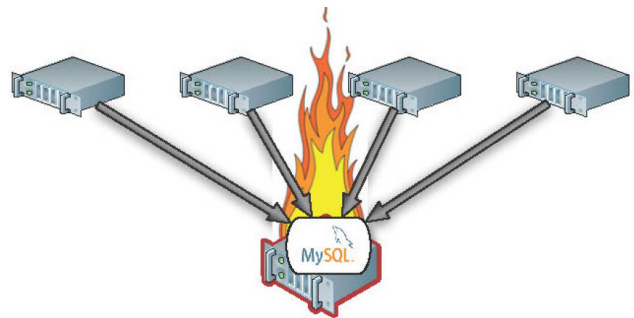
Photobox found that there were several conventional ways to solve the problem:

1. Throw as much hardware as they could at their infrastructure and have very powerful master databases
2. Have lots of powerful slaves replicated in real-time
3. Have a skilled and knowledgeable DBA to juggle the hardware, software, and tuning, as well as be responsive to problems at peak times

These three solutions carried them through the first eleven years of existence, but they could no longer continue with the strategy.

Sharding vs. ClustrixDB

Photobox was left with two options: undergo a full-scale sharding project to break up their applications or implement a solution like ClustrixDB. They considered two forms of sharding. The first comprised of a simple plan to separate the database into three different slices, each with their own set of tables, but this was considered to be expensive and high risk (hardware intensive, cooling space, and power at a premium). The other form was more complex, where they would horizontally shard the data. That was considered to be easier in terms of hardware, but more complex in terms of applications. It would be a big software project that had a lot of opportunity costs. Ultimately, they found the two sharding projects to be very expensive. Photobox then looked to Clustrix.



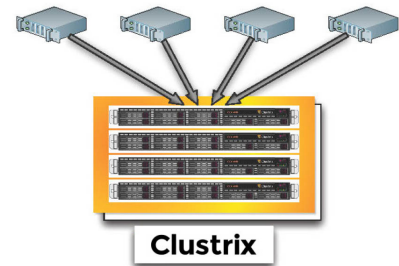
Before Clustrix, Photobox could see the runway running out. The load was increasing faster than they could upgrade their database hardware. A change in architecture was needed.

ClustrixDB Achieves Immediate Performance & Capacity

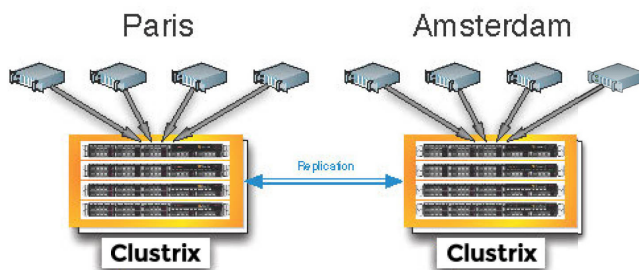
“Over the last year we’ve seen significantly better performance and our December service incidents were reduced by 89% year-on-year.”
- Graham Hobson, CTO, Photobox

Photobox chose to test out ClustrixDB, and decided that if it worked it would be a preferable solution. They had some very tough criteria for evaluating ClustrixDB. There were some difficult hurdles to cross, in terms of the robustness of the solution, compatibility, and performance that Photobox needed. “ClustrixDB passed all the tests we threw at it with flying colors,” said Hobson, Chief Technology Officer, and “we’ve been running live on ClustrixDB in both our primary and back up data centers since April 2010.” In the time since, Photobox had significantly less downtime (due to database issues) than they had previously under their conventional MySQL replications chain.

With ClustrixDB, Photobox has been able to build a database tier that is fully fault tolerant. Any drive, node, or switch can fail and the site can remain online with no interruption at all. All data is maintained at multiple sites to handle a complete site failure. This, combined with Photobox’s careful planning throughout their infrastructure, makes a very robust site that drives their business.



Above: Once the Clustrix database went in, Photobox no longer needed to worry about database performance or capacity. They were able to easily increase both as their site load grew over time.



With the addition of the second cluster in Amsterdam, Photobox was able to architect a database that transparently handles failures and can withstand the loss of an entire site.

According to Graham, Photobox had their best ever month for peak season sales “with markedly better performance and uptime than we’ve ever had before during a peak season.” ClustrixDB has effectively removed the performance and capacity bottleneck.

It was a tough evaluation with a new approach to databases and the ClustrixDB solution did what Photobox needed it to do, the reality of it was better than they’d hoped for and it made their lives a lot simpler in many respects.

Clustrix

Clustrix provides the leading scale-out SQL database engineered for the cloud. With ClustrixDB you can build innovative business critical applications that deliver real-time analytics on live operational data with massive transactional volume. Our exceptional customer service team supports more than one trillion transactions per month across a range of industry segments including Ad Tech, e-commerce, and social analytics. Clustrix customers include AOL, engage:BDR, MedExpert, Photobox, Rakuten, Symantec, and Twoo.com. Headquartered in San Francisco, Clustrix is funded by HighBAR Partners, Sequoia Capital, U.S. Venture Partners, Don Listwin, and ATA Ventures. ClustrixDB is available as a free trial software download that runs on any cloud, and on the AWS marketplace.

To learn more about Clustrix, visit us at www.clustrix.com

