Barona Resort & Casino
MIMIX Share Case Study

"Once you've got MIMIX Share set up and running, it runs very smoothly, without the need for ongoing management."

- Franklin Papaioanu, IT Manager, Barona Resort & Casino

Critical Issue

The gaming mandate of Barona Resort & Casino demands that no outside systems should be able to access or change any production data, whether over the Internet or through other connections. This would be easy to do if there were no links to the outside world, but Barona wanted to set up a Web-based "Player's Lounge." Guests could log into the Player's Lounge to see new offers and current player point levels.

To provide this service and still meet their strict data security requirements, Barona needed to find a way to supply the necessary information to the Player's Lounge while, at the same time, not allow guests or the Player's Lounge systems to access or update the production databases.

Business Challenge

When guests join the free Club Barona, they receive an ID card that can be used at the casino. As members play the slot machines, points are automatically added to their accounts. These points can be redeemed for free plays and complementary benefits such as free hotel stays, golf discounts, and restaurant discounts. Members can also earn complementary benefits by having their play tracked at the gaming tables.

The casino wanted to allow Club Barona members to view their points and other account information through the Web-based Player's Lounge. The question was, how could this information be accessed without opening a connection from the Web to the production databases? Barona recognized that the answer was to copy the required data into an area beyond the firewall that protects the production systems.

The next step was to find a solution that would facilitate this data replication seamlessly, automatically and rapidly. The emphasis on rapidly was important. Barona Resort & Casino is close to urban areas. Many Club Barona members can drive to the casino from their homes in less than 20 minutes. Barona wanted the Player's

Lounge data to be updated quickly enough so that members would be able to see recently added points even if they logged in as soon as they got home.

Business Profile

Company Name:
Barona Resort & Casino

Headquarters:
Lakeside, California, USA

Industry:
Gaming

Business Environment:

■ Casino and resort with a 400-room hotel, 11 restaurants, a golf course, a spa, 2,000 slot and video poker machines and 70 gaming tables.

■ J.D. Powers and Associates ranked Barona Resort & Casino as offering the "Highest in Satisfaction in the Southern California Indian Casino Gaming Experience" for two consecutive years.

■ Key systems include casino management, hotel management, human resources and payroll.

■ For security reasons, systems serving patrons over the Web must be isolated from the production systems and databases.

Vision Solutions Product:
MIMIX Share

Implementation Team:
Vision Solutions

Solution

Barona ultimately met their data movement challenge with MIMIX® Share™, a solution that can replicate data between a heterogeneous mix of hardware, operating system and database platforms in near real time. Once it's set up, MIMIX Share replicates data transparently, without the need for operator intervention.

The data that feeds the Player's Lounge comes from a combination of IBM i databases running on an IBM Power System 525 server and Microsoft SQL Server databases running on Windows Server-based HP hardware. The Player's Lounge uses a SQL Server database running on a Windows Server-based IBM blade server.

The Player's Lounge server sits between two firewalls. The inner firewall protects the production systems, blocking access to them from the outside world, including from the the Player's Lounge. MIMIX Share replicates the necessary data through the firewall from production systems to the Player's Lounge server.

MIMIX Share can perform two-way replication, but to protect the integrity of its production data, Barona uses only one-way replication. If patrons update their addresses in the Player's Lounge, those changes go through a manual verification process before they are applied to the production databases.

MIMIX Share's core processes do not have to run on the production system. Instead, Barona minimizes the load on its production servers by running the MIMIX Share kernel on a separate Windows-based system.

"That's one thing that I really, really like about this software," said Franklin Papaioanu, IT manager at Barona. "It has minimal drain on the Power Systems server."

Papaioanu also appreciates MIMIX Share's user interface. "Once you set up a replication model through the Director [the user interface], it paints a very clear picture of how your data is flowing," he stated. I also like the fact you can do a pre-test before committing a model. The pre-test gives you warnings about anything that may cause problems. Then, once the model is committed, you're good to go. MIMIX Share also saves previous models in case you have to revert to an earlier version."

Barona uses another Vision product, iTERA Availability, to maintain a backup replica of its production server for high availability purposes. When performing a role swap—switching the production and backup roles of the two systems—replication from the production system must be stopped. Replication is then started on the other system when it takes over the production role. MIMIX Share's user interface makes it easy to control the replication processes in this way.

Papaioanu also spoke highly of the speed of MIMIX Share. "It's very, very fast," he said. "After a change is made in the production database, before I'm able to run a query on the Player's Lounge database, it's already there."

Results

- Customers can view their account data and update their personal information, such as their addresses, but the Web-based applications and users cannot access or change production systems or data.
- MIMIX Share requires no ongoing administration.
- Most of the replication processing performed by MIMIX Share runs on a separate system, thereby minimizing the load on the production server.

Technologies

- MIMIX Share
- IBM i
- IBM DB2 for i
- Microsoft Windows Server
- Microsoft SQL Server
- 2 x IBM Power 525 – (one primary, one backup)
- IBM blade servers
- HP servers

Vision Solutions Product:

- MIMIX Share