

case
study

SHAZAM®

SHAZAM Makes a Big Switch
With ACI Solutions





Founded in 1976, SHAZAM® is a member-owned not-for-profit corporation that provides electronic funds transfer (EFT) and financial services to more than 1,700 financial institutions. Based in Des Moines, Iowa, SHAZAM is the sixth-largest EFT network in the country, offering a full suite of EFT solutions including card authorization, ATM, automated clearing house (ACH), Federal Reserve and switching services.

SHAZAM's customers are community-based financial institutions. Therefore, SHAZAM always searches for cost-effective products and services that allow these smaller institutions to remain competitive with the larger, nationwide ones. This customer-centric philosophy ultimately drove SHAZAM to purchase HP NonStop™ servers. By eliminating its legacy architecture of 25 years and replacing it with NonStop technology from HP, SHAZAM would gain the infrastructure to support rapid deployment of new products and services. The regional switch would be able to quickly and effectively issue new products into the market — giving customers a competitive advantage.



However, this project was no small undertaking. A project of this magnitude takes years of planning, and careful execution. To ensure a smooth transition to the HP platform, SHAZAM needed comprehensive systems management and monitoring tools.

Since SHAZAM had already established a solid partnership with ACI Worldwide through a previous purchase, the decision to extend this relationship was simple. SHAZAM was convinced that the breadth and ease-of-use of ACI's solutions would make a perfect fit. In total, SHAZAM purchased three systems management and monitoring tools from ACI:

The Operations Pack (TOP) — a high productivity front-end for HP NonStop servers

OpenNET/Automated Operator (AO) — a dynamic and powerful policy-based monitoring solution designed specifically for the HP NonStop platform

OpenNET/Vision — a performance monitoring and analysis solution that integrates trend reporting and detailed problem analysis for HP NonStop systems

TOP Cuts the Learning Curve

One may expect that a wholesale move from a legacy mainframe environment would result in major staff changes. However, this has not been the case at SHAZAM.

“TOP's color-coding features make it easy for operations specialists to understand and maneuver the tool,” said Terry Dooley, CIO and senior vice president at SHAZAM. “The GUIs are helpful and intuitive, and they eliminate the need to train everyone at the ‘TACL level,’” Dooley said. “Had we not had this tool, we would have definitely had to expand our headcount.”

Because TOP provides users with a familiar industry interface, it eliminates the need to type line-at-a-time commands or to remember command syntax.

“From an operations standpoint, TOP has given us the capabilities to expand on new functionalities,” said a computer operations supervisor at SHAZAM. “We are still relatively new to the HP platform, but with TOP we can achieve the same positive results as someone who has years of experience. TOP definitely cuts the learning curve.”

Easy Automation with AO

OpenNET/AO (AO) provides proactive monitoring and out-of-the-box automation capabilities to ensure continuous availability of mission-critical systems. At SHAZAM, AO alerts users if anything is going wrong.

“AO is our first line of defense to detect problems,” Dooley said. “It troubleshoots for us. AO has the ability to intercept EMS messages and report violations in real time.”

AO’s e-mail functionality has also been a tremendous benefit to SHAZAM. Before AO, SHAZAM spent a considerable amount of time finding what specific process a transaction was in.

“We had a manual process before, but with AO’s auto reports, we can do this in minutes,” said one production specialist. “AO notifies us of any problems, and then escalates it for us. This can save us hours in a given day.”

At SHAZAM, AO’s automated monitoring also performs the following:

- Checks for looping processes
- Monitors the TMF environment
- Watches the spoolers
- Monitors the MQ-Series environment
- Supports the online environment
- Automates the generation of safeguard reports
- Alerts SHAZAM to tape mount requests

SHAZAM Attains Perfect Vision

OpenNET/Vision gives operators quick, efficient use of their screens and monitoring. At SHAZAM, the alert feature

in Vision provides an instant alarm to pathway changes or issues. Employees are immediately notified when they need to escalate a problem.

“As an IBM shop, our operators were doing escalation on 80 percent of our problems, but only resolving about 20 percent,” Dooley said. “When we went to HP, we wanted to reverse that. We wanted operators escalating about 20 percent of the problems and resolving 80 percent. Vision has enabled us to do that.”

ACI’s solutions also allow SHAZAM’s operators to display all of their monitoring tools on one PC. Operators can thus easily move from one application to another. They are also able to watch multiple applications on a single screen. And because their screens are not hidden, potential issues are discovered early.

Moving Forward

As SHAZAM moves additional applications to its HP NonStop servers, it plans to take full advantage of ACI’s solutions.

“These products have so much to offer, and right now we’re only using a small subset,” Dooley said. “The depth of these products was the primary reason why we purchased them. This is an elite package. It’s hard to find anything else that matches up.”

Experience, Expertise

Every second of every day, more than 800 customers around the world rely on ACI solutions to process payments, manage risk, automate back-office systems and provide application infrastructure services. More customers use ACI software to manage higher payment volumes, of greater diversity, across more platforms and geographies than any other provider in our field. Since 1975, ACI has provided software solutions to the world’s innovators. We welcome the opportunity to do the same for you.

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