



SUCCESS PROFILE

No: 106

IN A SERIES

Time Warner Cable Broadcasts Availability

How would you feel if a company answered your call with, "I'm sorry, I can't help you right now; our computer is down." Frustrated? Angry? Ready to call a competitor?

How would you react if you were on the other end of the telephone line and computer downtime threatened your company's sales and its hard-earned reputation for superior customer service? You would probably want to take immediate action to prevent downtime from ever being a problem.

That's exactly what the South Texas system of Time Warner Cable (TWC) did when it faced a similar problem. It implemented MIMIX® for IBM® iSeries and AS/400® from Lakeview Technology and its Business Partner, Sirius Computer Solutions, to eliminate the threat of data and application unavailability.



Keeping South Texas Informed and Entertained

The parent company, Time Warner Cable, serves more than 12.6 million people across America. Its South Texas system has been in operation since 1979 and now serves 400,000 customers from a base in San Antonio.

TWC offers standard cable services, digital cable with over 150 channels, high-speed Internet connections and a number of business services. Like most service offerings, the pay-per-view events that TWC provides to its customers cannot be held in inventory like physical products. If TWC is unable to accept pay-per-view orders, it cannot put the unsold programs in a discount bin to be sold later.

TWC's corporate philosophy holds that keeping its commitments, pursuing quality as a way of life, and providing the best possible customer service are among the company's most important objectives.

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"We take our customer-service commitment very seriously," declared **Gina Martinez, IS operations manager for TWC.** "Our goal is to never take more than 90 seconds to answer a customer call."



Constant Availability. . . No Exceptions.™

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The commitment to customer service and the need to be able to operate round-the-clock have serious implications for TWC's computer systems. "They have to always be available," said Martinez. "In this business, customers do not accept 'the system is down' as an excuse for poor service."

24x7 Service

TWC's need for data and application availability became particularly apparent when computer downtime forced its billing systems offline during a major weekend pay-per-view event, seriously impacting revenue and customer satisfaction.

TWC needed to be certain that it would never risk its customer-service reputation or its profitability. That's when it turned to MIMIX for IBM iSeries and AS/400 from Lakeview and Sirius

In addition to concerns about both planned and unplanned downtime, TWC began to question overall system performance. Meeting its 90-second service goal requires short system-response times. But the company's strong growth meant that systems had to handle ever-higher transaction volumes, resulting in slower system response that put customer-service objectives at risk.

Something had to be done. TWC needed to be certain that it would never risk its customer-service reputation or its profitability. That's when it turned to MIMIX for IBM iSeries and AS/400 from Lakeview and Sirius.

Sirius Computer Solutions: Enterprise Solutions for Your Business

Sirius began in 1980 with headquarters in San Antonio, Texas, and has over 30 regional and satellite offices nationwide. Sirius is a Premier member of IBM PartnerWorld and the largest IBM eServer reseller in the world. It has received the IBM Lifetime Achievement Award – the highest honor given to an IBM Business Partner.

Sirius provides value-added solutions for customers in the enterprise-systems marketplace by utilizing leading-

edge technology, services and application offerings. It offers a wide range of solutions for eBusiness, Customer Relationship Management, Business Intelligence, Managed Availability, Enterprise Management, Server Solutions and Enterprise Resource Planning.

An Authorized Lakeview Technology Solution Provider, Sirius is a participant in Lakeview's Premier Marketing Program. It is one of the world's largest resellers of Lakeview's MIMIX software and services.

Two Heads Are Better and More Reliable Than One

To help TWC meet its Managed Availability objectives, Sirius first conducted a detailed performance analysis of TWC's systems. Based on this analysis, Sirius recommended a full solution package that would best meet TWC's requirements.

Sirius' analysis showed that TWC needed to upgrade its existing single-processor AS/400 model 530 system to a dual-processor AS/400 model 730, thus addressing some of TWC's performance concerns relative to rapidly expanding business.

TWC took advantage of the logical partitioning (LPAR) capabilities of AS/400 to spread its application workload over the two processors inside its new model 730 system. This also allows them to run separate production and test environments, thereby minimizing the risk of testing interfering with production.

Sirius installed and implemented MIMIX to replicate data and objects in real-time from the model 730 to the model 530 system. Now, the backup system is always ready to immediately take over operations should the need arise.

The upgrade also provided TWC with the opportunity to implement an exceptionally reliable Managed Availability solution. After installing the more powerful AS/400 model 730 system, TWC kept the original AS/400 model 530 and used it as a hot backup system. Sirius installed and implemented MIMIX to replicate

data and objects in real-time from the model 730 to the model 530 system. Now, the backup system is always ready to immediately take over operations should the need arise.

MIMIX Monitor™, a component of the MIMIX solution suite, continuously monitors both the replication processes and availability on the primary system. In the event of a production-system failure, it facilitates a rapid, transparent and automated failover to the backup system. MIMIX Monitor includes Internet Protocol (IP) address impersonation capability for seamless switching, as well as uninterruptible power supply (UPS) monitoring programs that assure adequate backup power levels.

Although system failures leading to unplanned downtime do occur, they are rare, particularly on the iSeries and AS/400. So it's likely TWC will find considerable value in the ability of MIMIX to reduce, or even eliminate, the planned downtime required for activities such as hardware and software upgrades and database backups and reorganizations. MIMIX Monitor enables easy and fast manual switchovers to the backup environment whenever maintenance must be performed on the primary system.

Regardless of whether users are switched to the backup system because of planned or unplanned downtime, MIMIX captures any data and system object updates applied on the backup system and automatically replicates them to the primary system when it becomes available again.

Smooth Upgrades

Occasionally, TWC must upgrade the hardware, operating system, database or applications on the primary

system. In the past, this may have involved significant downtime and introduced the possibility of errors as applications and data were migrated to the new environment. MIMIX eliminates these issues.

Because MIMIX can replicate among systems running different database and operating-system release levels, TWC can run multiple releases of system and/or application software simultaneously, while MIMIX keeps the different environments perfectly synchronized. So TWC can test a new release while operations continue unabated in the old environment. It can then cut over to the new release at any time, confident that the data in the new environment will be completely current and accurate.

Protecting Revenue & Customer Satisfaction

The total solution has already provided TWC with several benefits. Using LPAR to keep separate, but synchronized test and production environments on the same system allows TWC to avoid the expense of maintaining different test and production machines.

Moreover, the minimal administrative requirements of MIMIX have also allowed TWC to keep its employee costs under control. "Our IT organization has not

grown as quickly as our 80-person call center," explained Martinez. "We needed a low-maintenance system that, once plugged in, runs on its own. That's what Sirius delivered with MIMIX and iSeries. In addition, the ease-of-use of the software allowed us to cut training time by 80 percent, allowing our people to spend more time adding value for the company."



In the end, however, the primary reason for considering MIMIX was its ability to virtually eliminate downtime. “I now feel fully confident in our ability to keep our business going uninterrupted, 24 hours a day, every day of the year,” said Martinez. “And that has added a personal benefit. I can now relax and sleep a lot better at night.”



LAKEVIEW™
TECHNOLOGY

Lakeview Technology Inc.

Worldwide Headquarters

2301 West 22nd Street Suite 206
Oak Brook, IL 60523 USA
Tel: 630-573-0440

Lakeview Technology Asia-Pacific

Hong Kong, CHINA
Tel: +852-2970-3280

Lakeview Technology Europe

Brussels (Leuven) BELGIUM
Tel: +32-16-39-55-55

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www.lakeviewtech.com