

# CONNX<sup>®</sup> Case Study

## MONEX Deposit Company

CONNX Provides MONEX Connectivity and Real-Time Quotes on Precious Metal Investments  
Increases Sales Volume by More Than \$100 million



- Increases sales volume of precious metal by \$100 million
- Improves MONEX business practices by providing access to legacy data
- Upgrades current in-house system and equipment at low cost
- Reduces long-term MIS budget
- Provides scalable and secure information online

The latest trend in investing for those with extra cold, hard cash, now that the market has taken a downward turn, is gold, silver, and platinum coins and bullion. MONEX Deposit Company (MDC), located in Newport Beach, California, has been in the business of providing such services for 32 years and is the largest dealer of precious metals in the United States.

The company's interest in CONNX was initially sparked five years ago by its need to develop a PC application that would enable their sales staff to better manage their customer and lead information as well as simplify the process of tracking and managing call information. With all of their customer and lead information stored in RMS files on Alpha servers, the application had to have direct connectivity to be a success. With CONNX's ODBC driver for RMS providing the necessary

connectivity, the company was able to develop a Delphi-based contact management system that met these requirements and exceeded management's expectations. When asked about the benefits of using CONNX in this way, Brian Jenkins, Monex Treasurer and CIO, said, "We knew that such an application would improve sales staff efficiency. But, we weren't prepared for the actual results. We estimate that the solution has improved sales volume by more than 10 percent, (which translates to \$100 million, Ed.)"

With this success in hand, Monex decided to employ CONNX in other ways. Its MIS Department found that it could provide many of the company's end users easy access to legacy data stored in RMS files by giving them a Paradox front end with a CONNX ODBC connection. Brian Jenkins commented, "We've really tried hard to empower the end user with data access. By doing

so, our MIS staff has been freed from writing programs for data access and can focus on more strategic projects, which will improve the company's profitability in the long run."

MONEX also uses an open source OS, Linux, to host their recently constructed Web site, which posts real-time quotes for gold and silver prices and which was designed to help the company sell precious metals to a new market segment.

After several months of testing, the company decided to proceed with the project but not with this selection of components due to scalability and security issues, as well as cost. Instead, having heard that CONNX would be including a JDBC driver with its version 8.5 release, they decided to give it a try.

By the time CONNX 8.6 was released, the MONEX Web application went into production. "From the standpoint of application development, the CONNX JDBC

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solution made the project feasible," said Brian Jenkins, MONEX Treasurer and CIO. "During the prototyping phase, the company determined that benefits could be achieved by adding real-time services to its Web site. However, it was also determined that the technologies employed in the prototype would not be suitable for a full-scale, production version. The cost of trying to create a scalable and reliable solution was just too great. Given its requirements, the company felt that the only viable solution would be one incorporating Linux and Java technologies."

The low cost of using CONNX was another appealing factor, since MONEX was able to use relatively inexpensive hardware for the project. Each of the Web servers at MONEX is a Pentium running Linux. The Web server software is Apache, while the servlet container is Tomcat 3.2.3. The Web pages are generated by an internally written Java Web application, which is comprised of servlets and JSPs. The servlets, using CONNX, connect to the Alpha workstations and retrieve data that is forwarded to the JSPs for page creation and request fulfillment.

When asked about the effectiveness of this setup, Brian Jenkins said, "First, being able to move information between the Web and our legacy systems via your JDBC technology gives us access to a market (Internet) that we would, otherwise, be unable to tap into. It is now possible for us to deliver online account access to our customers as well as online trading... It was no more difficult than adding JDBC access to any other backend... it worked the first time we implemented the technology.

"CONNX provided a software solution that allowed the company to build a reliable, secure, and scalable solution that provides real-time, legacy RMS data to customers and prospects on the Web, using inexpensive hardware and open-source software."

MONEX appreciates the technical support and documentation that are provided with CONNX, both of which help increase ease of use. "I rate your support an A, and it is one of the reasons we stay with CONNX," says Jenkins. "We have been able to install, upgrade, and use the product with only the documentation as a reference. I think this speaks volumes about the quality of the documentation."

The low cost of training and implementation also enabled the company to get up and running in very little time. "It was no more difficult to implement than your average Windows application. I would even go so far as to say it was easier to implement than SQL Server 6.5. The company spent nothing on training. Given that we already had experience with other ODBC drivers, getting up to speed with CONNX was trivial."

The Web site continues to provide leads to the company's marketing and sales department, but their long-term goals include using CONNX in the implementation of an online trading service.

To view the MONEX Web site that provides live quotes for gold, silver, and platinum bullion prices, visit [www.MONEX.com](http://www.MONEX.com)

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