

Building an agile, extensible service delivery platform



Groupe T2i · Size: 200 employees · Industry: IT services and software development · Location: Sierre and Renens, Switzerland

Groupe T2i develops innovative software solutions and offers a variety of IT services that help companies accelerate their digital transformation strategies. With offices in Switzerland, France, and Canada, Groupe T2i supports more than 2000 customers in the public sector, real estate, banking, insurance, transportation, and other industries. For more information, visit groupe-t2i.com.

Challenges

- Streamline data center operations and maintenance
- Relieve network performance bottlenecks
- Integrate software and service offerings

Results

- Integrated the management of physical and virtual systems
- Improved network segmentation and security
- Implemented a policy model that can be extended to cloud and container environments

Solutions

- Cisco® Application Centric Infrastructure (Cisco ACI™)
- Cisco Unified Computing System™ (Cisco UCS®)
- Cisco Nexus® Switches

For more information

- [Cisco ACI](#)
- [Cisco UCS](#)
- [Cisco Nexus Switches](#)



Challenge: Improve systems integration and service delivery

Over the past 35 years, Groupe T2i's business has morphed into three distinct functions: software development, hardware integration, and managed IT services. While the functions remain independent silos, company leaders see tremendous opportunity—for both Groupe T2i and its customers—to align them and expand the possibilities for delivery and support.

“The long-term vision is to integrate our software and services,” says Christian Testuz, director of infrastructure and cloud business unit at Groupe T2i, “and be able to host and manage them in our data center, at a customer site, in the cloud, or a combination of them all.”

The first step was implementing Cisco ACI, the industry's leading software-defined networking (SDN) solution, as a new service delivery platform. Working in tandem with the Intel® Xeon® processor-based Cisco UCS, the platform has supercharged Groupe T2i's data center operations and fortified its service offerings.

“We used to manage everything with VLANs and the firewall,” says Yves Rey-Bellet, systems and network engineer at Groupe T2i, “but it was too manually intensive, there wasn't enough segmentation in the VLANs, and the firewall became a routing bottleneck.”

With granular segmentation capabilities and policy-driven automation, Cisco ACI has solved such problems.

“We have fully segmented all of our tenants and applications, so we have much better security and control,” Rey-Bellet reports. “We've also created traffic management policies that have reduced the routing burden on the firewall and improved overall performance.”

Network maintenance is far easier, he adds, and even less stressful. Groupe T2i used to update its network fabric once per year, and the multi-day event elicited fear of unknown spanning tree or TCP issues. With Cisco ACI, updating the network fabric is largely automated, takes only an hour or two, and is now performed quarterly.

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Yves Rey-Bellet

Systems and Network Engineer,
Groupe T2i





From administrators to architects

Both of Groupe T2i's data centers are now fully integrated and managed collectively using the Cisco ACI Multi-Site capability. The Active/Passive design will eventually be transitioned to Active/Active, and the entire environment is managed by two people.

"We're spending less time on the infrastructure and more time improving our services and helping the developer team," says Rey-Bellet. "We're operating more like systems architects than systems administrators."

Those architects have created the building blocks for Groupe T2i's future. They've established a standardized catalog of infrastructure services for internal teams. They've integrated Cisco ACI with IBM and VMware solutions, and will eventually do the same with Kubernetes. And they've defined policies that automatically adjust the network based on the needs of applications.

"Cisco ACI gives us integration and consistency," says Testuz. "Our application and security policies are now the same across our physical and virtual systems, and they will eventually be pushed to container and cloud environments."

Looking ahead

With more agility, better security, and the ability to extend its network to the cloud and beyond, both Rey-Bellet and Testuz believe Groupe T2i is on the cusp of exceptional business opportunity and growth.

“With these new capabilities, we can host bigger, more complex applications, we can reach new markets, and we can serve larger customers,” says Testuz.

Groupe T2i will also be able to achieve its ultimate objective of integrating its software and services, creating new sales and support models, gaining greater insight into the customer experience, and adjusting or optimizing that experience at a moment’s notice.

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