WSO2

CASE STUDY

west West Interactive

WEST DELIVERS OMNI-CHANNEL CUSTOMER COMMUNICATIONS VIA CLOUD PLATFORM POWERED BY WSO2 MIDDLEWARE



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Leading Provider of Cloud-Based Customer Experience Solutions Relies on Integrated, Modular WSO2 Middleware to Speed the Delivery of Services that Enhance User Engagement

Businesses recognize that brand value and customer loyalty are built not simply on the solutions they offer but on the total customer experience. Today, that means engaging in personalized interactions with consumers across their channels of choice—from phones to text, chat, Twitter, email, wearables and more.

No one understands the demand better than West Interactive Services. For nearly 30 years, the company has been creating communication solutions that empower enterprises worldwide to strengthen customer engagement. With West's cloud-based solutions, client organizations are enabling secure and seamless interactions across voice, mobile and other channels to increase productivity and profitability.

West's comprehensive customer experience management offering is built on several products within the cloud-enabled, fully multi-tenant and 100% open source WSO2 enterprise middleware platform. In part through the WSO2-powered platform, West Interactive Services facilitates nearly 300 million unique customer interactions each month.

Reaching Customers Across Multiple Channels

The heart of West's Interactive Services business is communication for a connected customer experience, including interactive voice response (IVR) and self-service, proactive notifications and mobility, and hosted contact center solutions—all built on a scalable and reliable platform. The company now handles over 3 billion automated customer interactions annually.

The solutions serve a broad range of industries, such as healthcare, education, utilities, retail, financial services, retail, insurance and telecommunications, among others. Increasingly, enterprises in these markets depend on West services to consistently interact with their customers across multiple channels.

"For example, a patient may receive a phone message, email and text reminder about an upcoming doctor's appointment," explains Pranav Patel, vice president of systems development at West. "It's no longer just a phone call; you have mobile apps, text messages, social media, email, the Web—and enterprises have to manage those and provide customer care solutions across all these channels."

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Moreover, because today's consumers demand anytime and anywhere access to information and support, it is not enough for the enterprises West serves to simply offer more channels.

"These channels have to be wholly integrated," Patel says. "The systems that provide these also should be very intelligent with the ability to proactively provide event-based or rule-based notifications. That's the business challenge at hand."

Solution: Cloud Platform Powered by Open Source Software

In seeking to address its enterprise customers' demands, West recognized that simply extending legacy systems would not give the company the flexibility to meet increasingly dynamic business needs. Instead, West would build a new platform that took advantage of a service-oriented architecture (SOA) based on modern middleware technologies. Additionally, the platform would run in West's private cloud in order to ensure cost-effective scalability and high availability for its growing roster of customers.

Facing a rapidly evolving market, the West development team did not have a clear picture of the final product and, therefore, did not want to make a significant capital investment.

"One of the biggest attractions of open source technology was that we could download the software and start playing with it, so the cost of entry was very low," Patel recalls. "At the same time, we wanted software that would let us get started quickly with a proof of concept."

A review of available open source options quickly led West to WSO2. Key factors were the platform's cloud-enabled, componentized architecture in which all the products were built to work together and could run equally well on servers or in the cloud. Also attractive was the WSO2 software's small footprint—measured in hundreds of megabytes versus the gigabytes of competing products.

"WSO2's flexible, pluggable architecture means we can choose and pick only the products we want, and the low infrastructure footprint lets us run several WSO2 products on a virtual machine," Patel explains.

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Vice President of Systems Development, West

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WSO2's rapid pace of product innovation also played a strong role in West's decision to build its platform on WSO2 middleware.

"We were living on the cutting edge of development, and that was the case with WSO2's products as well," Patel notes. "We were impressed with the company and knew we had found a good match."

Flexible West Customer Experience Management Platform

West's comprehensive customer experience management solution incorporates a cloud-enabled middleware platform based on a SOA, equipped with a core set of flexible technologies. The platform sits between the top layer of the architecture where applications run across different channels, and West proprietary services below. Through the platform West managed services can be exposed for client use with application programming interfaces (APIs).

"The vision here is to build several services on top of our platform, to enhance customer experience across multiple channels and multiple tenants. For example, services like identity management, context awareness, analytics, notifications, rules engine and more," Patel explains.

West's customer experience management solution architecture has several products within the WSO2 enterprise middleware platform at its core: WSO2 Enterprise Service Bus (ESB), WSO2 Governance Registry, and WSO2 Business Activity Monitor (BAM). WSO2 ESB serves as the SOA backbone, providing mediation and transformation between West's different applications. WSO2 Governance Registry provides run-time SOA governance, and WSO2 BAM monitors SOA metrics.

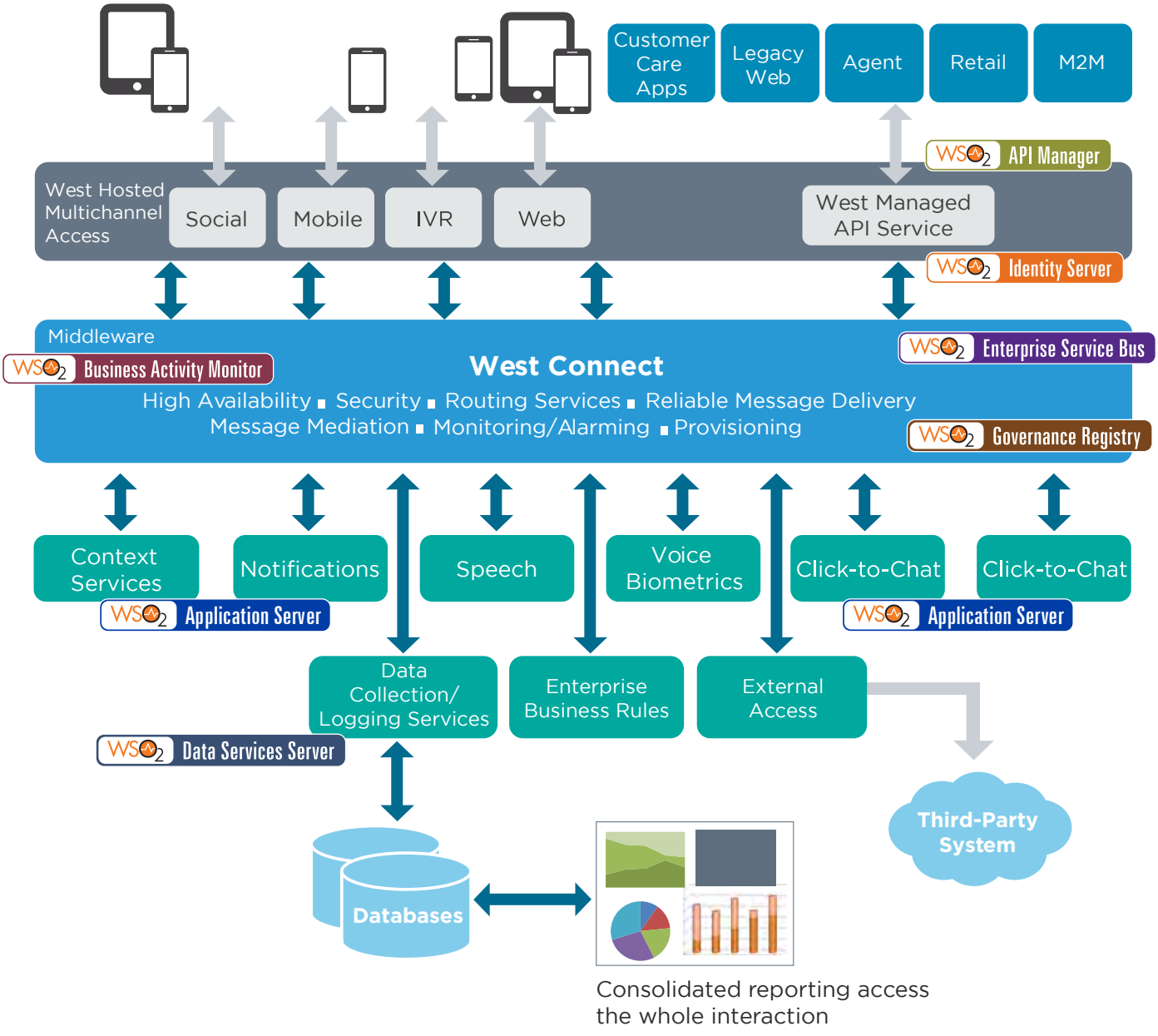
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> ***Pranav Patel,***
> ***Vice President of Systems Development, West***

Meanwhile, WSO2 API Manager sits at the front end, providing a way to expose APIs to internal or external applications that may integrate with the platform.

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"With WSO2 API Manager, we are able to stay at the forefront in addressing mobile demands," Patel notes.

Patel adds, "With the SOA and WSO2 middleware in place, we are using a lot of services and exposing them through APIs. As a result, we've been able to move away from many of our legacy systems and homegrown protocols."



Consolidated reporting access the whole interaction

West's customer experience management solution architecture includes several products within the WSO2 enterprise middleware platform.

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Increasing Agility

All WSO2 middleware products are built to work together and share many common functions, so it takes less time for the developers at West to get up to speed when they add a new WSO2 product. This in turn increases speed to market.

"The integrated WSO2 platform is a great benefit," Patel says. "Because the products share so many features, there is a shorter learning curve. It's easy for developers to understand the monitoring and logging because it's so similar from one WSO2 product to the next. Not only can we complete projects faster, but the maintenance goes down."

While West will continue to evaluate various options when adding new capabilities, the ease with which WSO2 products work together is often advantageous.

"For instance, at the beginning of 2015, we wanted to develop centralized identity management solution," Patel explained. "We evaluated other products, but in the end, the ease of integrating WSO2 API Manager and other admin portals tilted us toward WSO2 Identity Server. The ramp-up is so much simpler than using a third-party alternative."

Support services from WSO2 have also been helpful to West in expanding its platform.

"A lot of WSO2 architects are in Silicon Valley near our office. That helps us to get information quickly, know the products better, and validate our architecture."

Pranav Patel,

Vice President of Systems Development, West

"We really like that WSO2's engineers rotate between development and support, which leads to a high quality of support," Patel says. "Additionally, a lot of WSO2 architects are in Silicon Valley near our office. That helps us to get information quickly, know the products better, and validate our architecture. At the same time, the WSO2 team's understanding of our use cases has led to enhancements in the products."

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Continued Growth

Looking ahead, West is continuing to invest in WSO2 products to expand its customer experience management capabilities.

Centralized identity management using WSO2 Identity Server is in testing and planned for production in late 2015. West is also evaluating additional solutions that leverage WSO2 API Manager.

"One area of interest is using WSO2 API Manager to collect more data," Patel explains. "Many of our clients use multiple vendors to send SMS/text messages, but don't have a clear view into which vendors sent which notifications, and to whom. We see an opportunity for West to become clients' centralized source for this information, using APIs to submit and retrieve data."

Next, West is planning to deploy WSO2 Data Analytics Server (WSO2 DAS), the re-architected and renamed version of WSO2 BAM. WSO2 DAS adds complex event processing (CEP) for real-time analytics and machine learning for predictive analysis to WSO2 BAM's current batch analytics.

"We have a great deal of confidence in our partnership with WSO2," Patel notes. "We still continue to evaluate all the WSO2 products out there and we can easily see some fitting right into our platform. The work continues."