

## Supporting rapid launch of game-changing market intelligence service for retailers with Hadoop



### ESSENTIALS

#### Industry

Fashion trend forecasting

#### Company size

~500 employees

#### Business challenges

- Rapidly launch new market intelligence service for fashion retailers
- Support large and growing volumes of Big Data

#### Solutions

- EMC Isilon Scale-out NAS
- Pivotal Greenplum Database
- Pivotal HD
- WGSN INstock

#### Results

- Streamlined deployment with native Hadoop integration
- Enabled rapid launch of new market intelligence service
- Delivered high performance and streamlined scalability for growing Big Data assets
- Simplified platform administration

### OVERVIEW

WGSN Group is a strategic intelligence, insight, and trends company. With offices throughout Europe, Asia, North and South America, and the Middle East, WGSN Group provides a combination of Big Data, deep intelligence, and sharp creative judgment to help its customers seize opportunities in accelerating markets. WGSN is a subsidiary of Top Right Group, an enabling company of media and information intelligence firms.

### BUSINESS CHALLENGES

WGSN Group identified a promising opportunity to create a new market intelligence service that would help fashion retailers make crucial merchandising decisions. The service would need to gather and process huge volumes of product, sales, and pricing data gathered from across the industry—and would grow exponentially as the user base expanded. To successfully roll out the new service, named WGSN INstock, WGSN Group required an information infrastructure with the performance and scalability to handle both current and future Big Data requirements.

After evaluating offerings from EMC<sup>®</sup>, NetApp, and IBM, WGSN chose EMC Isilon<sup>®</sup> scale-out storage along with Pivotal<sup>™</sup> Greenplum<sup>®</sup> Database and Pivotal HD (Pivotal's Hadoop distribution) to provide a comprehensive Big Data analytics solution.

Sean Harley, group IT director at Top Right Group, explains, "Performance, scalability, and tight integration with Hadoop were the key reasons we chose Isilon. We also felt very comfortable with the partnership between EMC and Pivotal. In the end, the EMC and Pivotal solution offered the ideal balance of storage and compute with the right level of support."

### SOLUTIONS

WGSN Group deployed EMC Isilon scale-out NAS integrated with Pivotal Greenplum Database and Pivotal HD. Isilon provides Hadoop Distributed File System (HDFS) storage services directly to Pivotal HD's compute modules—enabling the high-performance transformation of raw data into market intelligence.

Running WGSN INstock's retail analytics service, the Isilon and Pivotal platform brings together details on thousands of brands from major retailers across the UK and North America into a single, consolidated portal. Through this innovative Web service, WGSN INstock enables buyers and merchandisers to easily compare competitive offerings, track sales, pricing, and markdowns, and produce rich graphical charts of color mixes and style selections to optimize their inventories and pricing.

EMC provided WGSN with design and implementation services to ensure the Isilon and Pivotal data products would meet the rigorous performance demands of the WGSN INstock service.

"We were impressed with EMC's Big Data knowledge and experience, which was very beneficial throughout the planning and design of the solution," notes Harley.

### **HADOOP INTEGRATION STREAMLINED SERVICE LAUNCH**

Getting WGSN INstock to market quickly was a critical aspect of WGSN Group's competitive strategy. After finalizing the analytics platform, the company deployed Isilon with Pivotal Greenplum Database and Pivotal HD in less than four weeks.

"Because the two platforms are so tightly integrated, Isilon and Pivotal saved our development team considerable time on implementation," Harley remarks. "Isilon's native integration with Hadoop also really streamlined the deployment process."

He adds, "Now that WGSN INstock is in production, we find it very easy to administer. We were even able to plug our monitoring solution into the system so we can proactively address any potential issues."

**"Together, EMC and Pivotal have a complete technology stack to address our end-to-end analytics and Big Data needs."**

Sean Harley  
Group IT Director, Top Right Group

### **DELIVERING GAME-CHANGING MARKET INTELLIGENCE**

With Isilon and Pivotal, WGSN Group now has the high-performance, scale-out solution it needs to power WGSN INstock and enable retailers to gain a new level of market intelligence. Serving an industry that continues to wrestle with shorter product cycles and more informed online consumers, WGSN INstock currently processes more than 3,000,000 data points on 250,000 fashion products gathered from the world's largest and most significant online stores. By rapidly transforming this raw data, Isilon and Pivotal empower retailers with up-to-the-minute market intelligence that enables better, faster business decisions.

"WGSN INstock is the biggest initiative in WGSN Group's history and a real game-changer in the fashion industry," says Harley. "Isilon and Pivotal deliver the performance and stability we need to drive this product launch, and we're confident the solution will easily handle our anticipated growth as we expand the reach of INstock further into the market."

To ensure success, WGSN Group is also working with Pivotal's Data Science division to bring together the new data sources to drive new trend forecasting models. As Managing Director Product, Juliet Bauer says, "Our customers need increasingly sophisticated models to help them predict what will sell. We can satisfy that need."

### **PRIMED FOR RAPID GROWTH OF BIG DATA**

WGSN INstock collects product data exclusively on a number of product categories across a large range of retailers, but WGSN Group expects the number of retailers and range of fashion categories to expand significantly in the coming years.

"By choosing Isilon and Pivotal products, we're able to scale easily and keep adding more retailers and Big Data streams without sacrificing performance," Harley states.

He also points out that the partnership between EMC and Pivotal is important for opening additional opportunities to provide analytical services both internally and externally.

“Together, EMC and Pivotal have a complete technology stack to address our end-to-end analytics and Big Data needs,” says Harley. “We look to EMC and Pivotal as strategic partners, not just product vendors. That partnership will be especially valuable to us as we explore ways to use analytics tools elsewhere at WGSN Group and other Top Right Group companies as we continue enhancing our knowledge-based solutions.”

## CONTACT US

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