Summary

Western Union helps loved ones near and far stay connected by moving money around the globe. The 160-year old company is evolving its business model, supported by a data strategy that will help enable expansion of digital products, growth of web and mobile channels, and a more personalized online customer experience.

Business Need

• Western Union has built significant scale in the money transfer business with 242 million consumer-to-consumer transactions and 459 million business payments in 2013 alone. The company operates in 200+ countries and territories, and conducts business in 120+ currencies.

• The company faces increasing competitive pressure from emerging technology players.

• Western Union is transforming and focusing on:
  – Developing an omni-channel approach that includes retail, web and mobile,
  – Expanding into new markets with e-commerce and other digital products, and
  – Reaching customers with a more tailored and personalized experience.

Challenge

• In 2013, Western Union processed more than 29 transactions per second, on average, which generated a significant amount of structured and unstructured data that must be integrated from diverse sources (legacy, mobile and online data).

• The company needs to cost-effectively deal with this data complexity, while simultaneously scaling access, storage, and processing.

• Data scientists must rely upon the data platform to conduct statistical modeling and predictive analysis, systematically noting trends in sending and receiving behaviors.

Solution and Results

• Western Union built a data platform based on Hadoop (Cloudera) and Informatica Big Data Edition.

• Western Union is one of a handful of very early adopters of Hadoop on such a global scale.