



HISTORIC FUTURES
the future is history

At a Glance

COMPANY: Historic Futures

FOUNDED: 2003

HEADQUARTERS: Oxon, UK

AUDIENCE: Brand Name Companies

INDUSTRY: Enterprise

WEBSITE: www.historicfutures.com

SERVICES: Web-based application for product traceability

CDNetworks SERVICES:
Dynamic Web Acceleration
China Acceleration

Key Results

Decreased average application load times globally by over 500%

Solidified big-brand customer base

Opened new business opportunities by providing improved performance and accessibility

Saved 80% in new infrastructure costs

Dramatically increased usage of its core application

Historic Futures Solidifies Its Customer Base by Improving Average Global Application Performance Over 500% While Saving 80% on Infrastructure

"With the CDNetworks Dynamic Web Acceleration service and local support teams, our global application delivery problems were virtually eliminated overnight."

Simon Warrick, Chief Technology Officer, Historic Futures

Historic Futures (HF), recognised experts in supply-chain traceability, offers world-leading technologies and consulting expertise. The company's unique Internet-based traceability service known as *String* empowers brands and retailers to visualise their entire supply chain, from primary production to finished product. Used by hundreds of businesses, including Gap, Levi's, Tesco, and Wal-Mart, *String* helps these leading brands increase information levels across their supply chain, and assure customers that their product quality matches branding claims.

The Challenge

In pursuit of global and specialised production, big and small brands alike have established supply chains comprising hundreds or thousands of suppliers dispersed around the globe — sometimes in remote and developing countries. Every day, thousands of users from these brands and their suppliers access the *String Application* to input traceability data.

HAMPERED BY POOR INTERNET PERFORMANCE

Poor Internet performance in critical supply-base countries and regions, such as Bangladesh, China, India, and Southeast Asia, made the *String* application load at painfully slow speeds. With *String* being served from dual data centres in Manchester, England, users were experiencing login delays of 25-30 seconds and extreme latency during application usage. This led suppliers in some areas to complain that the performance of *String* made the application unusable. As a result, HF's customers struggled to collect data needed for traceability purposes. HF needed to improve global performance of its application or risk losing customers.

REALISING THE DRAWBACKS OF IN-HOUSE OPTIONS

To address these issues, HF's IT team continued to evolve its thin-client version of the *String* application to accelerate access times. However, this didn't solve the problem of data flowing slowly between the origin server and end users. Next, the

team considered how it could serve the application locally in problematic regions. It evaluated some of the largest global hosting providers but found that each one lacked data centre presence in one or more core regions of the world. HF also concluded that building out its own global data centres would put too much strain on its limited IT resources and budget. According to Simon Warrick, Chief Technology Officer for Historic Futures, “Expanding our footprint would have cost thousands of pounds per data centre per month. Plus we would have had to deal with the headache of managing globally dispersed facilities.”

Key Objectives

In pursuing a solution, HF had three key requirements in mind. First, it needed application performance to be optimal in all regions, not just select countries. After all, its customers’ suppliers are located in hundreds of countries. Second, it required superior customer support from the application delivery service provider. HF was certain that even with the best laid plans and infrastructure, it would experience regional technical issues. To maintain the level of service its customers expect, HF sought a service provider that would respond as if *String* were its own application. Third, the financial scale needed to build out and manage globally distributed data centres was out of reach for HF. The company wanted a solution that could provide significant savings over the option of building out data centres globally.

The Solution: Dynamic Web Acceleration

HF’s hosting provider, UKFast, introduced it to the concept of content delivery network (CDN) services, and in particular, CDNetworks. HF quickly discovered that CDNetworks is one of few CDN service providers in the world that specialises in optimising and improving web application performance. Moreover, as the only global CDN with a leading position in Asia Pacific, CDNetworks was uniquely qualified to enable *String’s* performance improvements in core regions throughout Asia. “The connectivity issues in India and Bangladesh were giving us all kinds of performance problems,” recalls Warrick. Warrick was equally impressed with CDNetworks’ level of engagement. “Many vendors will barely give mid-sized companies the time of day, but CDNetworks took us seriously and was clearly committed to helping us realise our vision,” continues Warrick.

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BOOSTING PERFORMANCE AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Initial tests of CDNetworks Dynamic Web Acceleration service resulted in 300-400% performance improvement where HF was experiencing problems. “With the CDNetworks Dynamic Web Acceleration service and local support teams, our global application delivery problems were virtually eliminated overnight,” continues Warrick. And customer complaints have disappeared. That’s because the CDNetworks-enabled *String* application consistently performs up to 1,000% faster in some areas. In China alone, login times have dropped from 25 seconds to just 3 seconds.



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AVOIDING INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANSION

HF has also enjoyed significant infrastructure savings through its use of Dynamic Web Acceleration. The company is able to serve its global audience from dual data centres in the UK that tie into the cloud-based network of CDNetworks.

Thanks to the dramatic performance improvements, HF has started developing a more feature-rich version of the *String* application. "Not only will this make our end users even more satisfied with the value they derive from *String*, we will bring in new customers by offering an enhanced application. And we can do it without worrying about having to transport extra data between the remote client and our origin servers," concludes Warrick.

About Historic Futures Ltd.

Historic Futures Limited (HF) are recognized experts in supply-chain traceability with world leading technologies and consulting expertise. We make it possible for brands and retailers to visualize their entire supply-chain, from finished product to primary production and to communicate good practice to their customers. Visit HF on the Web at: www.HistoricFutures.com.

About CDNetworks

CDNetworks enables mission critical e-business in the world's most challenging markets. CDNetworks' unique position as the only multinational CDN with expertise and infrastructure in China, and other emerging markets, makes us a trusted technology and business advisor to more than 1,200 companies across the highly-competitive industries of software, travel, eCommerce, high tech, manufacturing, media, and gaming. Reliably delivering over-the-top performance anywhere in the world, CDNetworks helps businesses get closer to their end users without the limitations of hardware and private networks. Founded in 2000, CDNetworks has offices in the U.S., Korea, China, Europe, and Japan. For more information, please visit: www.cdnetworks.com

