



The Client

sQuidcard is a subsidiary of Nucleus Limited, a leading brand, internet and venturing business. sQuidcard is set to become the leading alternative to the debit and credit card networks for sub £10 tap-and-go transactions. sQuidcard has a multi-purse capability and is the only ITSO compatible card that combines an eMoney purse. sQuid is rolling out its eMoney and Transit network across the UK and is already working with local councils, transit operators, schools, colleges and Universities.

Applied Card Technologies is an independent UK company specialising in the design, development, installation and operation of smart card transaction systems. It provides turn key solutions and services to the retail, hospitality, transport and tourism markets world-wide. ACT smart card systems and services support around 8.1 million smart card holders, in the Republic of Ireland, United Kingdom, Europe and USA across a managed smart card POS estate exceeding 135,000 terminals.

“It’s been a great experience working with Grid-Tools.”

CASE STUDY

THE PROBLEM

Using a system that could potentially be handling tens of millions of transactions per year, sQuidcard had to be sure the system was tested to the limit. However, their deadlines were tight and they neither had the time to key in data or the capability to create realistic test data on a large scale for testing in a diverse range of scenarios.

THE SOLUTION

They chose Grid-Tools’ flagship product Datamaker to simulate merchants and customers having transacted for a period, enabling them to meet tight deadlines.

THE SATISFIED CUSTOMER

sQuidcard- fast becoming the leading alternative to the debit and credit card networks.

In truth, I would be surprised how any one launching a big system can do without something like this.

The key problem

sQuidcard is a leading e-Money alternative to debit and credit card networks, and is set to become the product of choice for sub £10 tap-and-go transactions. Experts predict rapid growth in this market, with sQuidcard well positioned to replace some of the £200bn sub-£10 cash transactions made each year in the UK. When rolling out a solution of this complexity to millions of card holders and potentially handling tens of millions of transactions a year, you have to be certain that the data underlying the system is tested to the limit.

“The e-money payment network is launching in May,” explained Barry Williams, the Commercial Director of sQuidcard, “but we had to be certain that it could scale to handle millions of customers and transactions.” At the heart of the problem was a tight delivery schedule for developing the solution, and the need to test it rigorously. “In our testing, we had to simulate a situation where sQuid had been in existence for a number of months, or years.” sQuidcard neither had the time to key all this data in by hand, nor the capability to generate realistic data on a large scale to test the system under a diverse range of scenarios.

The right choice



There were two options open to sQuidcard, “We could have had a team of people sitting at terminals, keying in accounts, and creating new accounts,” explained Barry Williams, “but this method would have meant missing the delivery deadline. What we chose to do was use Grid-Tools’ data generation product to simulate merchants and customers having transacted for a period.” The obvious benefit to sQuidcard was by using the automated method they could meet their objectives a lot quicker. Within the testing parameters, they could also replay different scenarios, and put a far greater range of diversity into the data.

“We chose Grid-Tools because they convinced my developers they had a great degree of competence and could deliver,” emphasised Barry Williams. “They really know the Oracle data structures, and were able to relieve some pressure off my development teams.” There were also certain advantages to working with a smaller, specialist company: “We are also a small company, and we understand that their overhead is a lot lower. This allowed Grid-Tools to offer a price-point which was suitable for us.” Most importantly, Barry explained, was the high degree of responsiveness from Grid-Tools, and the total understanding they demonstrated of sQuidcard’s objectives and technical challenges. Overall, concluded Barry, “it’s been a great experience working with them.”

A satisfied customer

Barry found Grid-Tools on the web, but was aware that alternative tools existed. “The issue we had was that the orientation of these tools was slightly different, and not exactly suited to our purposes. Also, a lot of the other providers of such tools are based in the states. This leads to a bit of a communication challenge,” insisted Barry. One advantage of working with Grid-Tools was their location which was within easy reach of London. “The ability to meet people face-to-face was a significant element in making a decision of which supplier to go with.”

Barry feels that sQuidcard made the right decision. “We needed a tool that could create the test data, get populated into a database, and do that in a short timeframe and within a reasonable price point,” Grid-Tools demonstrated that it could do this, and help keep the sQuidcard project on track. “Using Grid-Tools meant we could deal with other challenges and issues and not get tied down.” Without the Grid-Tools data generation product, the tight delivery dates for the sQuidcard project could certainly have slipped. “In truth, I would be surprised how any one launching a big system can do without something like this,” insists Barry. “I think it is a mandatory thing to do.”

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