

CUSTOMER STORY

# AIB Gains a Problem-Free Environment at a Fraction of the Cost with NIOS DDI



## THE CUSTOMER: AIB

AIB is a digital banking institution with multiple award-winning applications for mobile banking.

It came into existence in 1966 as a result of the amalgamation of three other banks and currently has more than 300 branches and head-office sites with more than 500 offsite ATMs and merchant devices. With a focus on supporting economic recovery in Ireland, AIB provides banking services to individuals and businesses, particularly small to medium enterprises. Personal banking services range from mortgages to insurance to investments, and business services include credit cards, merchant services, financing, and pension and retirement funds.

## THE CHALLENGE

### Too-Costly Tech Upgrades

The majority of AIB's banking transactions take place away from the branch counter today, and the bank is working to add technology to its branch locations with self-service kiosks and intelligent deposit devices and to enhance its mobile and online banking services.

AIB's network supports internal financial systems and external customer-facing systems, which makes the management of Domain Name System (DNS), Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (DHCP), and IP Address Management (IPAM) extremely critical. When asked what the consequences of a network failure would be, Daniel Turner, Network Planner for the Telecoms group within AIB IT, says, "We wouldn't be able to operate effectively—back to paper transactions!"

**“** The Infoblox solution has freed me up to manage more systems and we've had fewer issues. We've gotten time savings from the ease of operations, maintenance, and upgrades. And the cut over was seamless. We did it on a Sunday evening, and on Monday morning, the users didn't even know that the system had been changed.”

**Daniel Turner**  
Network Planner, AIB



The bank already had a commercial-grade solution in place that utilized Alcatel-Lucent VitalQIP for internal IPAM and a solution from another vendor for external. But in 2010, it was time to upgrade the system, and VitalQIP upgrades were time consuming of the number of components. The Sybase database, for instance, required an enterprise server on the front end, separate from the appliances that host DNS services. In addition, the per-IP-address licensing is very expensive, especially in an environment like AIB's where devices are frequently added to the network. So upgrading and continuing to operate the solution was an expensive proposition, and Turner wanted to see if there was a better alternative.

## THE SOLUTION

### A proof of concept that exceeded expectations

AIB compared the three-year projected costs of a major upgrade of the VitalQIP platform with the cost of installing and testing a new system from Infoblox. The numbers indicated that switching to Infoblox was the more economical option, and after a year or two, would provide substantial savings to the business.

A proof-of-concept demonstration by Infoblox convinced Turner that in addition to saving money, Infoblox could reduce the time and effort involved in supporting core network services. The Infoblox solution was easy to install and maintain and it had all the features Turner's team needed, so AIB went ahead and replaced the VitalQIP system with four Infoblox appliances deployed using patented Infoblox Grid technology.

Turner points out that since VitalQIP is an enterprise-grade product, the decision to switch to Infoblox wasn't about added functionality. "What Infoblox did excellently," he says, "is give us a solution that replicated the functionality we had but didn't require nearly as much attention." The Infoblox Grid is engineered for efficiency and reliability. Distributed appliances are managed from a central Grid Master and upgrades can be pushed out to multiple locations with the click of a button. Principles of high availability, such as a central shared database, back-and-forth health checking, and redundancy, make the architecture reliable, resilient, and extremely easy to manage.

AIB's appliances are deployed as "active/active" pairs, which means they can back each other up while distributing the workload. This provides redundancy without having any idle capacity. The boxes run Infoblox integrated DNS, DHCP, and IPAM (DDI). AIB is using them for internal DNS, and they are also integrated with Microsoft Active Directory servers as the central DNS repository.

During the installation, Infoblox worked with a partner to export records from the VitalQIP database, using Infoblox transformation algorithms to reformat them so they would show up properly in the Infoblox database. This process went well, and they did a trial run before cutting over.

**Customer:** AIB  
**Industry:** Financial Services  
**Location:** Dublin, Ireland

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- Upgrade DDI management capabilities
- Identify more economical solution

#### **RESULTS:**

- Licensing cost savings
- Improved management efficiency
- Reliable, trouble-free operations
- Quick and easy upgrades

#### **PRODUCTS:**

- NIOS DDI

## THE RESULT

### Problem-Free Networking Operations

The cost savings indicated in the initial comparison were realized, and the Infoblox solution paid for itself in three years, but Turner cites advantages beyond cost-effectiveness. “The Infoblox system has been inherently stable,” he says. “We haven’t had any problems with it. I’m very comfortable with the fully redundant Grid architecture.” He also points out that the web-based interface enables his 20 administrators to have access to the database from anywhere, and that built-in, role-based administration allows Turner to give users only the access their duties require.

The ease of maintenance and the reliability are also appreciated. “I’ve performed a number of upgrades that were very quick,” says Turner. “Just download the files, and install them on the appliances. In the days when we had VitalQIP, I had to work every few days on problems, which I don’t have to do anymore. And the man hours saved can be reallocated to more strategic activities.”

“Infoblox has freed me up to manage more systems, and we’ve had fewer issues,” Turner says. “We’ve gotten time savings from the ease of operations, maintenance, and upgrades. And the cutover was seamless. We did it on a Sunday evening, and on Monday morning, the users didn’t even know that the system had been changed.” He concludes by saying that, based on the stability plus the ease of operation and maintenance, he would definitely recommend Infoblox to fellow networking professionals.



Infoblox unites networking and security to deliver unmatched performance and protection. Trusted by Fortune 100 companies and emerging innovators, we provide real-time visibility and control over who and what connects to your network, so your organization runs faster and stops threats earlier.

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