

# Music retailer captivates consumers with continuous access to world's largest CD collection

Superstore's 300 listening stations enable shoppers to instantly sample selections from more than 5.5 million CD tracks



"We have the biggest CD and DVD collection in the world. Many people travel great distances to shop here for recordings they cannot find anywhere else. With our Integrity-based OpenVMS environment, we are giving exceptional service to our customers, increasing sales and consolidating our outstanding position on the market." Rainer Schulte, IT manager, Saturn Electro-Handels GmbH, Cologne, Germany

## Objective:

Enable consumers to instantly access music tracks from a growing library of more than 300,000 CD titles

## Approach:

Upgrade the server platform of the 300-station music browsing infrastructure to an HP OpenVMS cluster of HP Integrity servers and a 9 TB VRAID 5 HP StorageWorks EVA system

## IT improvements:

- Ultra-high performance, availability and scalability of OpenVMS clustering
- Price/Performance and flexibility of standards-based HP Integrity architecture
- Continuous, split-second access to 5.5 million CD tracks from 300 listening stations
- Expandability to serve steep seasonal spikes and 20% annual growth in CD library
- Disruption-free service even during maintenance and upgrades

## Business benefits:

- Breadth and depth of selection delights consumers and distinguishes retailer
- Consumers instantly access tracks of choice from 300,000 CDs
- 300 stations provide split-second response, playing up to 40,000 CDs per day
- Shoppers spend more time and money in store



HP customer case study: HP OpenVMS cluster of HP Integrity servers

Industry: Retail



## Experiencing the biggest CD collection in the world

A landmark to music lovers throughout Europe, the Saturn Music Dome occupies three expansive floors of a building that was once ranked as Europe's tallest skyscraper. The Dome advertises itself as housing the largest CD and DVD collection in the world.

The 3,500-square-meter superstore offers shoppers a selection of more than 300,000 CDs that encompass just about all eras and genres of recorded music. Distinguishing itself not just in size and pricing but also in service, the Dome provides consumers with 300 listening stations where they can listen to any of the more than 5.5 million tracks in the store's collection.

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Providing consumers with continuous, instantaneous access to this vast and growing library is an HP OpenVMS cluster of two HP Integrity rx2620 Servers and a VRAID 5 HP StorageWorks EVA system with nine terabytes of capacity.

“We don’t just sell the CDs that top the charts,” says Rainer Schulte, IT manager of the Saturn Music Dome, the largest retailer in the chain of 120 music and consumer electronics stores of the Saturn Group [www.saturn.de]. Founded in 1961 as a single shop, Saturn today operates stores in Germany, Austria, France and Italy and employs about 5,000 staff personnel. “We have the biggest CD and DVD collection in the world. Many people travel great distances to shop here for recordings they cannot find anywhere else.

“By listening to whatever they like,” continues Mr. Schulte, “people often spend more time in the store and discover new artists and selections. So we see the benefits at the cash register. With our OpenVMS environment on the HP Integrity platform, we are giving exceptional service to our customers, increasing sales and advancing our outstanding position in the market.”

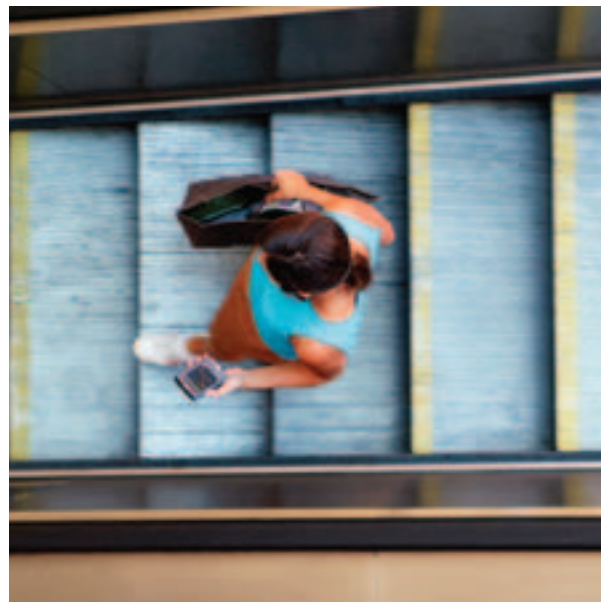
### **Transforming choice into consumer loyalty—and sales**

“We give our customers a shopping experience that exceeds their expectations,” says Mr. Schulte. “With our music browsing system running on an OpenVMS cluster of Integrity servers, customers access their choice of sound clips from about 5.5 million CD tracks in less than a second.”

Such an abundance of choices might overwhelm shoppers. But instead, Saturn engages them in a unique shopping experience through its music listening infrastructure, which is integrated within display areas dedicated to specific types of music, such as jazz, hiphop, electronic, classical and opera. The consumer browses a section, selects CDs of interest and, at a nearby listening station, simply passes the bar code of the sealed package under an optical reader. The OpenVMS-based browsing environment receives the bar-coded data and instantaneously transmits the requested MP3 file to the consumer’s listening station.

“After assessing other companies’ offerings, we determined that a platform of HP Integrity servers with OpenVMS was our preferred solution. The HP configuration offers the best clustering and superior price/performance benefits.”

Rainer Schulte, Saturn Electro-Handels GmbH



**Enriching the shopper’s experience—efficiently**

Saturn’s merchandising innovations efficiently enhance and individualize the consumer experience. In the high-volume, margin-sensitive world of music retailing, such a strategy requires high-performance—and cost-effective—IT. “We use reliable, advanced technology to enhance the services that we offer to our customers,” says Mr. Schulte.

Its CD browsing infrastructure helps the Saturn Music Dome turn its investments in knowledgeable staff, vast inventory and premium floor space into competitive assets.

Saturn personnel convert and record each track of every new CD into MP3 files that reside in the store’s continually growing StorageWorks library. “We are adding 30,000 titles every year,” says Mr. Schulte. “Before long, we expect to employ 20 terabytes of storage.”

On an average day, the system receives approximately 5,000 consumer requests. “But during the December holiday season, we play up to 40,000 CDs a day,” says Mr. Schulte. “So we require storage and server technologies to deliver ultra-high levels of performance, availability and scalability.”

With the OpenVMS cluster of HP Integrity servers and an HP StorageWorks network storage solution, the Saturn Music Dome has chosen an IT platform that combines superior availability, performance and scalability with the economy and flexibility of an industry-standard architecture. And its industry-leading OpenVMS clustering technology is the same robust software that runs the mission-critical, real-time operations of leading enterprises throughout the world.

## Saturn solution at a glance

### Primary applications

HP OpenVMS cluster of HP Integrity servers enable 300 listening stations to instantly access 5.5 million music tracks in the world's largest CD collection

### Primary hardware

- Two HP Integrity rx2620 Servers, each equipped with two processors and 4 GB of RAM
- HP StorageWorks EVA system (VRAID 5) with Fibre Channel, providing 9 TB of storage capacity

### Primary software

- HP OpenVMS version 8.2.1 operating system and clustering software

### Music never stops

Proven to deliver decades of continuous, ultra-high performance in the most demanding environments, OpenVMS clustering enables companies to cost-effectively build and manage highly integrated, resilient and scalable infrastructures that achieve up to 100 percent application and data availability.

By selecting the Integrity-based OpenVMS environment, Saturn gained an IT platform with the simplicity, agility and value to keep pace with its dynamic business needs—now and in the future. OpenVMS clustering allows disruption-free maintenance and upgrades, and it easily evolves to handle seasonal spikes in demand as well as growth in data and transaction volume. Ideal for the ever-changing media industry, the OpenVMS-based Integrity platform can also readily adapt to new technologies and business models.

### Building business with “best clustering and superior price/performance”

When Saturn decided to expand and upgrade its music-browsing platform, its IT team rigorously tested and evaluated various IT solutions, including a Linux configuration from IBM. “After assessing other companies’ offerings,” says Mr. Schulte, “we determined that a platform of HP Integrity servers with OpenVMS was our preferred solution. The HP configuration offers the best clustering and superior price/performance benefits.”

Saturn collaborated with HP enterprise solutions partner Concat AG [www.concat.de], a leading systems integrator in Germany, to plan and implement the solution. HP engineers and Concat consultants worked together to move the browsing system onto the Integrity-based OpenVMS environment. They jointly configured, customized and pre-tested the solution using loaned equipment from HP—an Integrity rx2620 Server and an HP StorageWorks MSA system. After testing the entire configuration at their facility, Concat consultants installed the turnkey environment in the Saturn data center.

“From the start, HP and Concat have been very reliable partners and they collaborate well on our behalf,” Mr. Schulte continues. “We required a system with the capacity to meet our high demands for performance and reliability now and well into the future. Together, we achieved an excellent solution for the Saturn Music Dome and its thousands of customers. If we have to make new decisions, Concat and HP will be the first companies we talk to.”

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