

## PruProtect deploys Qualica's End User Application Availability & Performance Monitoring Platform on their Mission Critical Website

### *The Client*

Launched in September 2007, PruProtect is a joint venture between Prudential UK and Discovery selling life insurance to the UK market. PruProtect's product range includes Life Cover, Income Protection and severity-based Serious Illness Cover.

The company's operations are based in South Africa and its products are sold via a network of independent brokers in the UK. The vital sole interface between the company and its broker network is the PruProtect website.

### *The Scenario*

UK-based PruProtect is benefitting from real-time monitoring of exactly how users experience its mission-critical online applications. The insurer now has proactive visibility into the experience of end users and can quickly ascertain the scope of any issue.

The PruProtect website is mission critical and absolutely key to the company's success. Not only does it need to be customer centric but also fast, responsive and available 24/7.

PruProtect operates in a sophisticated, highly competitive and regulated marketplace. It is crucial that external brokers or financial advisers have immediate access to its pricing and product information at all times. When meeting with customers, for example, brokers need to be able to draw policy pricing in real time to provide immediate quotes.

The website also supplies pricing to third party online 'aggregators'. These websites pull costs in from a variety of online sources for comparative purposes. The PruProtect website thus needs to provide pricing to these aggregator sites rapidly and effectively to prevent the company losing potential business.

In addition, because PruProtect's online applications are such an integral part of the business, the company constantly upgrades its website and needs to carefully monitor performance following each change.

The company employs tools to monitor infrastructure and application availability but needed to understand how users really experienced the service it delivers. It needed a sophisticated solution that would shed light on the user experience.

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**Nick Brown**  
Development Manager  
PruProtect

### *How Qualica Helped*

PruProtect's sister company, UK-based PruHealth, has used Qualica's User Experience Monitoring (UEM) solution for some years to gain insight into how users experience the performance of its online applications. PruProtect therefore bought the solution in mid-2008. It used the product initially for gathering statistics to enable understanding of how the website was performing.

Since then, PruProtect has extended its use of the solution to include real time Application Availability monitoring as well as Application Performance monitoring for key internal PruProtect applications. The tool works by running a series of steps (typical user actions) through the website on multiple servers known as collectors. The series of scripted steps run in the UK and SA.

Scripts are run at different intervals – every five minutes to measure end-user Application Availability, and every half an hour for Application Performance monitoring and trending purposes. UEM provides detailed metrics on end-to-end application and service performance.

### *Results*

PruProtect's key requirement for its online application is high availability. UEM from Qualica is helping to ensure this by high frequency end-user monitoring of mission critical web applications. The company now has detailed metrics on end-to-end application and service performance. This holistic view enables the PruProtect team to quickly ascertain the scope of any issue.

The tool provides PruProtect real information about what its website users are actually experiencing, with automatic notifications to alert relevant people of any issues. It therefore ensures that PruProtect can identify and resolve any potential problems before they can have any major impact on end users.

"We have had two recent instances in which the tool has been exceptionally beneficial," says Nick Brown, PruProtect's development manager. "It enabled us to pick up potential problems very early, allowing us to resolve them quickly, with minimal impact."

To monitor user experience, the company runs the UEM scripts across multiple servers every five minutes. The solution also monitors application performance following new releases or upgrades. It constantly monitors the effects of these changes to ensure that they do not cause performance degradation that may lead to loss of business.

For this purpose, another series of actions is run every half an hour, on one collector in the UK, as well as one in SA. "End user monitoring gives us a good idea if there is any connectivity degradation - as opposed to application degradation," says Brown.

The detailed data produced by Qualica's UEM is used to identify and monitor trends. PruProtect pulls its own reports from the UEM system, interpreting them and using the information to better its applications and plan for the future.

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