

# Grampian, CalMac, and Fathom™ Replication

Fathom™ Replication optimises the availability, performance, and management of critical business systems.

*“Two out of five enterprises that experience a disaster go out of business within five years. Business continuity plans and disaster recovery services ensure continuing viability.”*

Gartner

## A LESSON IN SYNERGY

### Attain Business Continuity

Progress Application Partner – Grampian Software were recently approached by a high-profile customer to recommend a business continuity solution for the business-critical, Progress-based application which Grampian had supplied. Grampian were eager to get a Fathom project under their belts, and technically, Fathom Replication was a perfect fit, so they put Fathom forward as one of several business continuity options.

As Richard Thorp, Development Manager for Grampian Software explains: “Firstly, it’s a Progress product, and provides a ‘hot’, virtually ‘up-to-the-second’ copy of the database. We had implemented replication projects elsewhere using scripts, but this has the problem of more scope for error, increased network overhead, and the backup will be ‘warm’ rather than ‘hot’. Other operating system and hardware-level replication products cannot fully support the Progress database and have the risk of corruption in the replicated database. Another selling point was the ability to use the replicated database in enhanced read-only mode for reporting – this customer makes extensive use of reporting tools, and being able to take this load off the primary server was another key feature in the sale.”

### Protect Mission-critical Applications

‘This customer’ is Caledonian MacBrayne, who have been providing passenger ship transport on the waterways of Scotland since 1851. Caledonian MacBrayne is a household name, not only in Scotland, but throughout the UK. Today, they maintain ferry services to 22 Scottish islands and 4 Scottish peninsulas. CalMac, as they are affectionately known, provide a crucial amenity to the residents of the islands and also provide transport for the hundreds of thousands of visitors to Scotland, keen to explore the more remote parts of this popular, romantic tourist destination.

The system in question, supplied by Grampian Software is OpenAccounts, one of the key financial applications available worldwide and developed in the UK by another Progress Application Partner. The OpenAccounts system has been the cornerstone of CalMac’s financial infrastructure for several years. As such, Grampian was fully aware of the importance of OpenAccounts to CalMac – as well as the importance of the CalMac to Grampian Software.





CalMac provide a vital service to the remote, island residents and essential transportation services for the Scottish tourist economy.

***“The main reason [for replication] was the importance of the application to our business.”***

Denise MacDonald  
Network and Support  
Manager

Says CalMac Network and Support Manager, Denise MacDonald, “The main reason [for replication] was the importance of the application to our business. As well as accounts processing, this system has many feeder applications (i.e., Reservations and Ticketing, and the Purchasing System). They all require access to the OpenAccounts application.”

#### **Ensure Business Viability**

With only 20 users and a database size of around 1 Gigabyte, CalMac’s comparatively small installation enables the transport of 5 million passengers and 1 million cars a year. With an income of almost £44 million in 2002-2003, CalMac’s importance to the Scottish economy cannot be overstated. Further, since the OpenAccounts application suite is at the centre of a traditional-style business which is expected to run 24 hours a day, rain or shine, ‘come hell or (frequently) high water’, ensuring continuous availability is tantamount to ensuring business survival.

CalMac operate in some of the least hospitable conditions in Europe, so Nature’s perils and the unpredictable are no strangers to them. In CalMac’s business, they generally do have disasters in the back of their minds.

In the event of an emergency at the CalMac IT centre, Fathom Replication will act not so much like an IT lifeboat, but as an ever-available, identical replacement ship. For CalMac management, that brings peace of mind.

What’s more, Fathom has already proved its worth in a real-life situation. A routine hardware replacement was performed without disturbing the workforce by invoking the replicated system. Unfortunately, things didn’t go quite according to plan, but, when the master system was finally brought back on-line, Fathom quickly reinstated the status quo.

Says Thorp, “Both the promotion [of the reinstated live system] and re-set were controlled by CalMac’s IT staff, who have no training on Fathom whatsoever, just scripts we left them with.”

Grampian Software’s Account Manager for Scotland, Dougie Stewart describes the event, “A regular tape device replacement situation required zero downtime thanks to Fathom Replication. It unexpectedly turned into an emergency as the hardware replacement itself failed. It was no problem, however, since the replicated system had already been invoked. When we brought the live system back on-line, Fathom took care of synchronising and it was all back up and running as if nothing had happened within the hour.”

***“The hardware replacement failed [and with Fathom] it was all back up and running as if nothing had happened within the hour.”***

Dougie Stewart  
Account Manager  
Grampian Software

***“Having to carry out a live failover, with no disruption to service, justifies the decision to implement this system.”***

Denise Mac Donald  
Network and Support  
Manager

***“A large percentage of our user base is interested in the [replication] technology.”***

Richard Thorp  
Development Manager  
Grampian Software

This, from a system which requires a minimum of baby-sitting. Says MacDonald, “Fathom Replication works seamlessly in the background, mainly it is checked to ensure it is running and we then do nothing to it. It just works!”

#### **Eliminate Data Loss**

So, what was CalMac’s conclusion? Was Fathom Replication the right choice for them?

CalMac’s MacDonald states, “Having to carry out a live failover, with no disruption to service, justifies the decision to implement this system. We have a payroll database which runs on Progress and is supported by Grampian. We will make recommendations in the future to implement Fathom Replication for this application, too.” For Grampian, this was also the first experience of using Fathom Replication. The verdict? As Thorp says, “Very solid all around.”

Having recognised the potential demand – and, therefore, revenue stream – for business continuity solutions, Grampian placed three staff on the project to be mentored by the Progress specialist. Working in partnership with Progress Professional Services, their staff quickly picked up the skills to set up and maintain Fathom Replication for their customers in future.

Thorp emphasizes, “It was a very small learning curve indeed.”

#### **Prepared for the Future**

As a result, Grampian is now positioned to market Business Continuity Planning (BCP) as part of their service offerings. Such offerings are more and more in demand, as 24-hour, continuous availability grows in importance to their customers.

Already, other Grampian clients are taking notice of the new Fathom-based BCP solutions offered by Grampian.

Says Thorp, “We have received two further orders, and a large percentage of our user base is interested in the technology.”

Stewart adds, “This definitely has the potential to become a significant revenue stream for us. In fact, our first reference sale has already been made and there are others in the pipeline.”

#### **About Grampian Software**

Grampian Software specialises in the development and integration of employee management and accounting software as well as specialist systems for the Public Transport and Whisky industries. They also offer bespoke software development services.

Formed in 1970, they employ around 65 staff at offices in Aberdeen and Glasgow with additional sales and support staff based throughout the UK. They have over 350 customers throughout the UK and a network of dealers who resell their Payroll and HR software.

<http://www.grampian-software.co.uk>

#### About Caledonian MacBrayne

Caledonian MacBrayne (CalMac) is a limited liability company whose share capital is wholly owned by Scottish Ministers as successors to the Secretary of State for Scotland following the establishment of the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Executive.

CalMac currently owns and operates a fleet of 31 vessels providing passenger, vehicle, and shipping services to the islands off the West Coast of Scotland and in the Clyde estuary, and retains two others on charter. There are currently 26 routes within the network. In 2002, just fewer than 5 million passengers and over 900,000 accompanied cars were carried on the company's services.

<http://www.calmac.co.uk/>

#### About OpenAccounts

OpenAccounts' accounting software is installed in over 730 customer sites worldwide. OpenAccounts' "best of breed" philosophy focuses on strength in back office transaction processing and integration with best of breed third party applications. It also adds value to the finance function with 'extended finance', making practical use of e-business technology to automate standard processes and workflow, not only within finance, but providing self-service access and information delivery across the entire organisation and to customers and suppliers. The product is extremely scalable and, as such, OpenAccounts is equally suitable for the smaller less-sophisticated or departmental end user as with the larger more demanding corporate or head office user.

<http://www.openaccounts.com>



#### Worldwide and North American Headquarters

Progress Software Corporation, 14 Oak Park, Bedford, MA 01730 USA Tel: 781 280 4000 Fax: 781 280 4095

#### Europe/Middle East/Africa Headquarters

Progress Software Europe B.V. Schorpioenstraat 67 3067 GG Rotterdam, The Netherlands Tel: 31 10 286 5700 Fax: 31 10 286 5777

#### Latin American Headquarters

Progress Software Corporation, 2255 Glades Road, One Boca Place, Suite 300 E, Boca Raton, FL 33431 USA Tel: 561 998 2244 Fax: 561 998 1573

#### Asia/Pacific Headquarters

Progress Software Pty. Ltd., 1911 Malvern Road, Malvern East, 3145, Australia Tel: 61 39 885 0544 Fax: 61 39 885 9473

Progress, OpenEdge, and Fathom are trademarks or registered trademarks of Progress Software Corporation in the U.S. and other countries. Any other trademarks or service marks contained herein may be the property of their respective owners.

**PROGRESS  
SOFTWARE**

[www.progress.com](http://www.progress.com)

Specifications subject to change without notice.  
© 2004 Progress Software Corporation.  
All rights reserved.