



AVL

Leading global powertrain company creates secure mobile file sharing environment for internal and external users, with Accellion.

“Accellion does everything we need, and perfectly supports our business model and workflow processes. Its new mobile-first strategy and products will support AVL for years to come”

Thomas Fischer
Specialist, IT Infrastructure
Analysis

AVL is the world's largest independent company for development, simulation and testing technology of powertrains (hybrid, combustion engines, transmission, electric drive, batteries and software) for passenger cars, trucks and large engines. It has been specializing in the development of economical drive systems for more than 60 years – founded in 1948 AVL has more than 6,650 employees in 45 countries.

Challenge

AVL had been using SFTP, alongside proprietary tools, to share large files and encrypted connections with its development partners. But AVL saw the risk of potential data leakage from the growing offerings of free, consumer-grade online storage providers, such as Dropbox, Google Drive and Microsoft's OneDrive, that could potentially be used to exchange sensitive and confidential data.

Previously, to offer an integrated yet secure method for external collaboration with customers, partners and suppliers, AVL had rolled out an extranet built on SharePoint. However this had a standard file-size limit of 2GB and the underlying complexity, which was optimized for large projects, prevented AVL's IT team from offering self-service options. This delayed the fulfillment of site and account requests by weeks. While some projects at AVL last for years there are many that can just last a month, so AVL required a solution that would streamline administrative overhead.

With global development teams and subsidiaries using different storage and content management systems, AVL wanted to standardise on one distributed and robust solution that supported the Microsoft environment, in order to improve collaboration and decrease the time and money spent supporting these efforts. This meant finding a solution that seamlessly integrated with various versions of SharePoint (2010, 2013 and Office 365), Distributed File Systems and Outlook, supported mobile platforms, Windows 7 and 8, and provided a paradigm for worldwide file synchronization and access.

A final hurdle was that AVL's total stored data was doubling every two to three years, so it was essential to find a platform that could handle the sharing of huge volumes of content, as well as large files. AVL develops and improves many powertrain systems in addition to developing and marketing the simulation methods that are necessary for engine and vehicle testing. The AVL developed simulation software is focusing on design and optimization of powertrain systems, and the data, models and videos it produces can be larger than 60GB in size, which most online content management systems are not equipped to support.

Quick Facts – AVL



Deployed Since

2013



Number of Users

**6,500 internal
unlimited external**



Custom Web Interface

Yes



Email Integration

Yes



Mobile Integration

Yes



Provides secure sharing to all internal users, and external business partners



Integrated with established enterprise solution such as SharePoint



Authentication credentials and private cloud options enhance data security

Initially AVL looked to their storage providers EMC and NetApp. Following lengthy investigations AVL decided that neither met their business requirements, and additionally, both companies' mobile solutions were very early stages, rather than being an integrated part of their offering.

"We decided we needed to find experts in secure data exchange between devices and everywhere we looked, Accellion came up as the answer," said Thomas Fischer, Specialist, IT Infrastructure Analysis, who takes care of user management and external access at AVL.

Solution

"We embarked on a proof-of-concept to see if the solution was as good as the YouTube videos, and were surprised that unlike other providers, it really was," said Fischer. "Accellion ticked all the boxes, and the level of pre-sales support was at such a high level that it was a big factor in our decision to go with Accellion."

AVL's IT team was surprised and excited to see how quickly its early users adopted the system. The pilot was so successful that test users had to be held back from continually adding external collaborators to support their projects, until Accellion was fully deployed.

AVL began rolling out the solution to all its employees and, after only two to three weeks, Accellion became integrated into their daily workflow. Employees had been requesting a way to access content via mobile phones without the need for a VPN, and with Accellion's secure mobile app containerization, employees rapidly began using the mobile applications to collaborate with internal and external partners, from wherever.

"We didn't have a single complaint during the roll out. Staff were amazed that not only could they access content on a mobile device, but also they could edit Office documents on any device

from within the Accellion app. In fact, many have now told us they don't know how they ever lived without it," said Fischer.

The IT department was just as pleased with Accellion as the end users. For security, they'd required that the solution authenticate using LDAP credentials and Microsoft Active Directory, with an option to have 2-factor authentication for very sensitive projects. They were also pleased with the on-premise private cloud deployment, which provided them an even greater level of control over business data. One of the company's subsidiaries had been using Box as an hosted alternative but AVL did not want confidential data stored in an external public cloud service, so partners now collaborate with AVL through Accellion.

AVL's main servers are deployed on-premise in Austria, and there are continental hubs in Tokyo and Plymouth, Michigan. All data is automatically replicated between the three sites. In addition, there are local services planned for India and China, to serve these markets more efficiently.

More than 6,650 internal users at AVL, as well as up to 3,000 external collaborators will use Accellion for secure mobile file sharing and collaboration. The solution will also be used by an additional 5,000 clients, and business partners to distribute software updates and documentation within secure view-only shared folders. AVL is now looking forward to integrating Accellion with their Open-Text infrastructure, to take advantage of additional collaboration features.

"Accellion does everything we need, and perfectly supports our business model and workflow processes. It continues to add new features and innovations that support our employees, and its new mobile-first strategy and products will support AVL for years to come," said Fischer.

About Accellion

Accellion, Inc. is the industry leader in providing private cloud solutions for secure access and sharing of enterprise information across devices, enabling employees to work securely wherever. Founded in 1999, Accellion is an award-winning, private company headquartered in Palo Alto, California with offices in North America, APAC, and Europe. The company has evolved from its roots in cloud storage into a leading enterprise security software provider. More than 12 million business users and 2,000 of the world's leading corporations and government agencies, including Procter & Gamble; Indiana University Health; Kaiser Permanente; Lovells; Bridgestone; Harvard University; the Securities and Exchange Commission; and NASA use Accellion solutions to protect confidential information, ensure compliance, increase business productivity, and reduce IT costs.

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