



Solution gives Haste more speed

Hosted Exchange environment enables Haste to deliver rapid response

For Haste, business success led to growth and expansion, but it also created IT headaches. Comms links were becoming congested, server infrastructure was being stretched and remote access had to be restricted. With further expansion on the cards, the business needed a more flexible IT solution and so they looked to a hosted environment delivered by Network Interlinks.

BACKGROUND

Haste is one of the most successful and best respected support services companies in the country. Operating from sites in Hampshire and Leicestershire, they specialise in the maintenance and repair of electrical and gas services, from sub-mains through to consumer appliances. In an emergency, they understand that a rapid response is essential, so their teams of Electricians, Appliance Repair Engineers, Field Agents, and registered Gas Safe Engineers are constantly ready, seven days a week.

Charlie Avens, Commercial Director at Haste explains, “The whole business is focused very strongly on customer service and customer care. We’ve worked with the electricity boards now for some sixteen years. They wouldn’t be talking to us still if we didn’t do something right.”

Charlie went on to talk about Haste’s need to change their IT infrastructure. “It was totally outdated and needed refreshing. When it was initially setup we were just one office which quickly grew to two and the communication between the sites meant that everything was routed through the head office. It created such a bottleneck.”

Not only did the congested data links cause problems for communications between their two offices, it also affected the field engineers and the teams based at the mobile workshops who use Microsoft Exchange to manage their workloads. “We rely on electronic communication for all of our business and it’s key for communication with our operatives on the ground. Basically part of our quality control process is all about making sure we have information to hand very quickly” says Charlie.

Other elements that needed addressing included an onsite backup solution that was becoming more difficult to manage, Microsoft products that needed updating and server hardware that required replacing.



SOLUTION SUMMARY

- Exchange server migrated to dedicated hosted environment
- Integrated into existing company AD domain
- Up-to-date Cisco routers installed
- Resilient comms lines introduced
- Online backup solution implemented
- Ability to deploy DR servers in the cloud

SOLUTION

Dedicated hosting with robust connectivity

The first part of the solution was to renew their comms lines and install up-to-date Cisco routers in order to introduce greater resilience. In addition it was decided to provision their Exchange server within a dedicated virtual environment hosted by Rise, who specialise in delivering business class services from their UK Data Centres.

This meant that all email traffic was now handled by Rise's network infrastructure. "It was creating such a big bottleneck as about 40% network traffic that came in had to go straight out again. That's now eliminated so we've really reduced the traffic and the load" says Charlie.

The hosted environment also reduces the need for any capital investment in server hardware. Charlie explains "We did consider implementing new servers at both our existing offices and it would have meant putting a server in any new site as well. The capital outlay would have been far higher." Commenting on the revenue model he says "When you've got continual improvement from a system that's been subcontracted it means you're going to be keeping up with the times and you're not going to have the trauma in another 4 to 5 years to say right, we need to look at a new server again and start all over".

The exchange server is part of the Haste Microsoft Domain, making administration easy for the whole organisation whilst providing seamless connection to other applications. The provisioning of the server in the cloud also allows the viewing of HD photographic attachments via Outlook web viewers, negating the need to copy large attachments up and down the low bandwidth lines.

Data is now backed up to the Cloud from both the remaining on site systems and the Exchange server. This backup service allows the provisioning of DR servers in the Cloud should local servers fail and removes the need for local tape backup.

OUTCOME

Faster communications and deployment

The solution has brought a number of benefits for Haste as Charlie explains. "This is a more reliable solution and with the way the company is growing, we're going to need more remote working facilities. We are looking at setting up another office and it enables us to do that very quickly and easily.

The flexibility is that we can get someone with a laptop and he's on his email account within minutes. Whereas, if we were going to deploy a remote server into a new office we'd be talking about weeks realistically. So now we can hit the ground running.

The field engineers get their emails much quicker. They also have the facility where they can log on from home which used to create more traffic, but we're happy now to open it up and allow anyone to log on."

Commenting on the project Charlie went on to say "The length of time to implement was not so important just as long as we didn't have interruption to the business. We have to be out on site within four hours when something's gone wrong, so we need to know as soon as that e-mail's come through giving us instruction so we can react to it straight away.

We've worked with Network Interlinks since 2003 and they've always been very professional. The project was delivered on budget. They put the system together as quickly as they could and it all worked very well, so I've got no complaints there at all, they do a good job."

"We sat down with Network Interlinks and discussed the best solution bearing in mind we are on a program of expansion. We were looking at bringing in additional offices and needed a design which gave us the growth potential"

Charlie Avens
Commercial Director, Haste

BENEFITS

- Improved network resilience
- Reduced data traffic
- Lower capital spend
- Supports rapid business expansion
- Improved remote access
- No more tape backups & greater data security
- Flexibility to add resources as and when required
- Easy to provision DR servers



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