n*i*

NETWORK
INTERLINKS

Tailored solution for Marson Fabrics

Textile merchant utilises the Cloud to host enterprise applications

When Marson Fabrics relocated their Head Office to central London, they decided that it was the right time to replace their dated IT infrastructure, but didn't want to use up valuable office space or budget creating a new comms room in which to house it all. So they asked Network Interlinks to come up with a solution to meet the immediate and future needs of the business.

BACKGROUND

Marson Fabrics is a long established textile merchant and design company based in London. Sourcing fabrics from as far afield as China and Turkey, they work closely with their customers to supply material that meets their individual needs for both quality and design.

Increased trading with the Far East meant the business was placing a greater emphasis on flexible working, so staff needed to be able to easily access their systems and data whether in the office, at home or abroad. Any new solution would therefore need to provide greater levels of business continuity and system availability.

Meanwhile, the design team were creating large graphic files so there was also a need to ensure that this data could be accessed rapidly whilst being easily backed up and stored. Alister Heath, Financial Director at Marson Fabric says, "We were finding that the backups were running all night and hadn't finished in the morning. Data recovery was a pain with tapes as well."

In addition they also wanted to take the opportunity to replace their desktop PCs and upgrade software such as Windows, Microsoft Office and Exchange to newer releases. Alister explains, "Our decision was really driven by business need and we just had to find a solution within reasonable cost."

M A R S O N   F A B R I C S

SOLUTION SUMMARY

- Hosted Cloud solution for enterprise applications

- On-premise servers / storage for fast access to large files

- Citrix XenApp to deliver internal & external applications

- Data mirroring and snapshots to protect data

- No need for tape based backup solutions

- Microsoft Windows, Office and Exchange all upgraded

SOLUTION

Hosted Cloud & on-premise blend

To help them tackle these challenges they turned to trusted partner, Network Interlinks, to provide the right solution. "We have been using Network Interlinks for 15 years. We know them and they've never let us down" says Alister.

A hybrid solution utilising a hosted Cloud environment with the addition of some on-premise servers and storage was proposed. Marson's Microsoft Exchange system and enterprise applications were migrated to the Cloud, including Mertex, the company's ERP solution. These applications were then delivered internally and externally to users via Citrix XenApp thin client technology, a platform that Marson already knew well. "We have used Citrix for over 10 years so were already used to accessing remote applications" commented Alister.

Although Mertex was a legacy application, Network Interlinks was able to integrate it into the Citrix environment, taking advantage of the improved availability of the platform. At the same time they were able to upgrade the version of Exchange to deliver both performance and functional enhancements to the business.

In order to manage large sized graphics and image files produced by Marson's design team and the company's document management system, on-premise servers and storage were also provisioned. It was important that this data could be stored and accessed without using up valuable bandwidth, reducing the need for expensive connectivity.

This locally stored data was both replicated to the Cloud environment and to mirrored storage appliances located at the company's warehouse in Harlow. All servers and data based in the Cloud were protected by regular snapshots which were incrementally transferred to the providers back end storage. This removed the need for any tape based backup solution on site. Alister says, "The solution is very easy to use. It's quite seamless in many ways".

OUTCOME

Space increased, capex reduced

Although the project has been primarily focussed on reducing the amount of office space used up by IT equipment, there are a number of other benefits delivered by the solution. The smaller on-premise comms room reduces the power and air conditioning requirement, helping to lower overall costs. Hosting in the Cloud ensures that systems are available 24/7 and that data is properly backed up, providing greater levels of business continuity and disaster recovery. It also removes the reliance on tape based backup solutions which can prove difficult to manage as data levels grow.

For Marson it also means that there is no need for large scale capital expenditure on new and replacement equipment moving forward. This simplifies the budgeting process as Alister explains, "It does make it easier having a regular monthly cost rather than some big capital expenditure. It evens things out, making planning and cash flow easier and when budgeting we know exactly what our costs are going to be."

When commenting on the costs of the project Alister went on to say, "The project came in exactly on budget. There have been no nasty surprises. Network Interlinks were very competitive and compared to some of our other suppliers their costs are very reasonable."

"The main thing with Network Interlinks is that they have never let us down. They're always determined to find the solution."

Alister Heath
Financial Director, Marson Fabrics

BENEFITS

- **Reduced office space required for IT equipment**

- **Reduced power and air con needs lowering costs**

- **Improved system availability and business continuity**

- **Data protected and no need to use backup tapes**

- **No large scale capital expenditure**

- **Regular monthly costs to simplify budgeting**

n*i*

Network Interlinks
318 Worple Road
London SW20 8QU

t 020 8739 0660
e info@networkinterlinks.com
w www.networkinterlinks.com