

Addleshaw Goddard Outlaws Data Center Inefficiencies With VMware Software

VMware ESX Server, VirtualCenter and Vmotion Transform System Management, Reduce Server Sprawl and Underpin Disaster Recovery Strategy



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

INDUSTRY: **PROFESSIONAL**

RESULTS

- 6:1 server consolidation ratio
- Improved server utilization
- Reduced TCO of servers
- Compressed testing cycles from days to hours
- Created method for major system upgrades with no server downtime
- Built more cost-effective disaster recovery solution
- Reduced hardware maintenance costs

"We first implemented VMware ESX Server to avoid the high costs of purchasing multiple servers and our use has grown organically ever since. VMware is now part of every major IT rollout and we actually treat ESX Server as if it were hardware. VMware software is a critical building block of our infrastructure that has introduced an unprecedented level of flexibility by making our applications portable."

Daniel Simms
Head of IT Operations, Addleshaw Goddard

Addleshaw Goddard Faces Sprawling Server Farm

Addleshaw Goddard is one of the UK's leading law firms, acting for more than 80 FTSE 350 companies and nearly 100 public sector organizations. Its 1,220 employees, including 162 partners, are based in three UK cities—London, Leeds and Manchester. With revenues of £125.2 million, Addleshaw Goddard ranked 10th in the 2004 Legal 500 listing of top UK law firms.

Daniel Simms, head of IT operations for Addleshaw Goddard, is responsible for managing the firm's entire IT infrastructure and leading strategic IT projects. Assisted by a 10-person technical team, Simms must assess and implement innovative technologies that generate time and cost savings, improve efficiency and increase Addleshaw Goddard's competitive edge, while also enhancing the firm's client services.

A core aspect of Addleshaw Goddard's business is document production and client communication. To support these activities, the firm requires a reliable IT system that performs well. However, Simms' IT department faced a constant problem; each time a different application was deployed, a new server had to be purchased and integrated with the data center. This method was cost-prohibitive, a poor use of resources and adversely affected IT infrastructure performance. In addition to solving this issue, the technical team found itself with several other challenges to address:

- Reduce data center management time and complexity
- Ensure consistent infrastructure across all sites
- Control spiraling hardware costs
- Deliver a cost effective testing environment for future application rollouts
- Meet demand for the quick deployment of a training environment.

ESX Server: Tackles Tactical and Strategic Issues

Addleshaw Goddard first assessed VMware® software as part of a tactical project to build two high-performance training and development systems quickly and cost-effectively. VMware ESX Server™ was the only product on the market that allowed Simms and his team to achieve this goal without purchasing additional hardware.

Running entirely on ESX Server, the initial VMware implementation hosted Interwoven's Worksite Document Management System (DMS) and trained more than 1,000 users. The deployment was such a success that Addleshaw Goddard has since used VMware software strategically for every major IT project. This includes company-wide implementations of Windows Exchange 2003, an HR system and a library management system.

Addleshaw Goddard's virtual infrastructure is comprised of management tools, VMware VirtualCenter and VMotion™, which have transformed each of its data centers into a single pool of computing resources that can be tapped into according to demand.

The benefits to Addleshaw Goddard of moving to a virtual infrastructure include:

- **Hardware and Management Cost Savings.** Existing hardware is used more effectively with servers operating at higher capacity while delivering improved performance. The need to purchase new hardware for each application has been eliminated.
- **Increased Technical Agility.** Centralized application management allocates computing power to specific applications, thus guaranteeing optimal performance at peak times. Testing time is decreased—new servers can be cloned and provisioned in a matter of minutes.
- **Reduced Server Downtime.** Virtual machines can simply be moved in real-time from server to server so essential maintenance occurs without any impact to the end-user.
- **Staff Efficiencies and Improved Customer Service.** Key business applications are quickly deployed. The high-performance and reliability of applications running in virtual machines leads to increased staff efficiencies and better customer service.

Virtual Infrastructure in Practice

With staff members accessing applications running in standardized virtual environments, ESX Server enables IT consistency and compliance across the business.

"We first implemented VMware ESX Server to avoid the high costs of purchasing multiple servers and our use has grown organically ever since," says Simms. "VMware is now part of every major IT rollout and we actually treat ESX Server as if it were hardware. VMware is a critical building block of our infrastructure that has introduced an unprecedented level of flexibility by making our applications portable."

In addition, ESX Server allows Addleshaw Goddard to move from using an outsourced disaster recovery solution to hosting its own remote disaster recovery center without purchasing multiple servers. This was a strategic decision aimed at providing a more cost effective solution and rapid recovery in the event of server failure.

VMWARE VIRTUAL INFRASTRUCTURE AT WORK

- ESX Server, VirtualCenter and VMotion
- 10 HP DL 560 Servers
- Two CPUs per server
- 9GB RAM per server
- Guest operating systems: Microsoft® Windows® 2000 and 2003
- Applications include: Microsoft SQL Server 2000, Exchange 2003, File and Print, HR system, Interwoven DMS
- Four offices connected by 100Mbps MPLS IPVPN
- Five HP MSA 1000 SANS

Controlling IT resources across offices in four different locations as well as a separate disaster recovery site yields considerable management overhead. The centralized control and instant provisioning capabilities of VirtualCenter have simplified this task while reducing administration time.

VMotion™ provides the ability to move running virtual machines between physical servers in real time and is used by Simms and his team to eliminate downtime and carry out testing procedures. They are frequently able to conduct server maintenance in the middle of the day by simply moving virtual machines between physical boxes.

“We were first off the blocks with ESX Server, and when VirtualCenter and VMotion were introduced, the VMware virtual infrastructure proposition became even more exciting. We have created an infrastructure for the future that gives us greater visibility than we’ve ever had before,” says Simms.

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