



## Aviva reduces risk and minimises environmental impact with server transformation project



### Customer agenda

- Continuous Improvement/Innovation
- Growth/Business Change

### Services

- Current State Assessment
- Infrastructure Virtualisation
- Server & Storage Consolidation

### Technology

#### Software:

Microsoft Windows Server 2003,  
VMware ESX, PlateSpin PowerConvert

#### Hardware:

HP, IBM and Dell servers

### Customer challenge

Aviva insures one in five households, one in seven motor vehicles and more than 800,000 businesses in the UK. Trust is fundamental in the insurance business, which means Aviva must be able to deliver on its promises and policies. With IT playing such a key role in the business, Aviva needed to minimise risk and increase agility by optimising performance and replacing legacy technology.

### Computacenter solution

Aviva partnered with Computacenter to transform two of its datacenters. As well as deploying a new server operating system and hardware, Aviva consolidated and virtualised its environment. This resulted in the consolidation and migration of 320 applications, upgrading 688 servers and decommissioning more than 220. The project has helped simplify IT management and reduce server provisioning time from six weeks to less than one.

### Results

The new server infrastructure is more flexible, cost-effective and reliable. Power consumption has decreased, as has downtime, total cost of ownership and risks to business continuity. At the same time as reducing its environmental impact and power consumption, Aviva has been able to enhance its competitive advantage through increased agility. All these factors help to ensure the company's customers receive a high-quality, sustainable and consistent service, which upholds their trust in Aviva.

“In such a demanding and crowded industry, it is essential that Aviva stands out. By increasing the efficiency of our internal operations and IT infrastructure, we are able to provide customers with a reliable and high quality service.”

**Steve Houghton**  
Infrastructure Architect  
Aviva

## Customer profile

### Making insurance easier for thousands of customers

Aviva insures one in five households, one in seven motor vehicles and more than 800,000 businesses in the UK. Founded in 1797, Norwich Union merged with CGU in 2000 to create the Aviva Group, which is the largest insurance services provider in the UK.

The group also has an international presence, and is the fifth largest insurance group in the world with 59,000 employees and more than 40 million customers.

Aviva has seen significant expansion in recent years; maintaining this growth is a key priority for the company along with cost rationalisation and simplification of its legacy infrastructure.

## Business challenge

### Fostering trust in a volatile market

Trust is fundamental in the insurance business - Aviva's customers expect the company to deliver on its promises and policies, no matter what might be happening in the world's financial markets.

With Aviva's products encompassing investments, retirement, protection and healthcare, motor, household and travel, customers rely on the company to provide advice and financial assistance when they need it most.

To meet its customers' expectations, Aviva must not only deliver good quality, value-for-money products but also ensure the stability of its business through the mitigation of risk. This focus on risk management is particularly important when it comes to technology. Many of Aviva's business and customer services are underpinned by IT, so it is essential that the company optimises the performance and availability of its core datacenter systems.

With some of its servers running the legacy Windows NT4 operating system, Aviva was keen to upgrade this environment to reduce not only risk but also total cost of ownership. Steve Houghton, Infrastructure Architect at Aviva, comments: "As an insurance company, Aviva understands the importance of minimising business risk. We needed to eliminate the risks associated with running internal systems on a legacy platform."

## IT solution

### A virtualised, consolidated and upgraded server environment

To achieve its goals, Aviva embarked on a massive infrastructure transformation at two of its datacenters. This included:

- Updating its operating systems to Windows Server 2003
- Replacing aging hardware
- Consolidating its server estate
- Implementing a new virtual environment

Virtualisation was a key part of the project, as it would enable Aviva to create a stable but cost-effective platform for future growth. To help deploy the new virtual infrastructure and the other elements of the project, Aviva required an IT partner with significant datacenter expertise. "Following a competitive tender, we selected Computacenter as it had extensive experience in the field, and was able to demonstrate the success of previous similar projects," comments Steve.

Computacenter assisted with the initial audit of the server estate, scheduling, design of the virtualised architecture and provided the engineering resource for the virtualisation work, the upgrade to the new operating system and migrating the servers onto a new domain, as well as providing ongoing support throughout the project.

The project team, which comprised a combination of both Aviva and Computacenter staff, used VMware virtualisation technologies and PlateSpin PowerConvert to implement the new environment.

Although the original scope of the project encompassed 160 applications and 800 servers, the initial audit revealed there were actually 320 applications being hosted on 1,200 servers at the two datacenters. Despite this significant change in project scope, Computacenter managed to exceed the original consolidation target, achieving a 12:1 ratio and decommissioning 229 servers. "Although the project was extremely complex, Computacenter was very flexible and minimised the number of project change requests, which helped ensure the implementation was delivered within budget," comments Steve.

These results were also delivered with minimum disruption to Aviva's business, as Steve confirms: "It was essential that our systems suffered minimal downtime throughout the upgrade. By following proven processes and using the rollback capabilities of Platespin PowerConvert, we were able to safeguard system availability."

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## Results

### Improving business agility and reducing costs

The project has benefited both the IT department and the company as a whole. In addition to reducing business risk, the project has enabled Aviva to improve the availability, performance and resilience of internal support systems.

“Since implementing the new server infrastructure, we now have greener, simpler and more cost-effective datacenters,” comments Steve. “Computacenter had an integral role in ensuring the success of such a complex project, we were impressed by the openness and the collaborative approach taken by the project team.”

For the business, these improvements in the datacenter have helped to:

**Cut IT costs:** The new server environment is smaller and easier to manage, therefore reducing the total cost of ownership of Aviva’s datacenters. The insurance giant will also be able to make cost-avoidance savings on new servers by maximising the number of virtual servers on each physical device

**Reduce environmental impact:** By decreasing the number of operational servers, Aviva has been able to reduce its power consumption, which not only lowers costs but also helps the company reduce its impact on the environment.

**Increase business agility and flexibility:** The creation of a distributed virtual hosting service will simplify the delivery of future projects and provide a more efficient mechanism for changes to Aviva’s infrastructure. For example, the company is able to roll-out new services much faster, with it now taking less than a week to provision a server for a new system, compared to six weeks previously.

“While the original business case was predicated on the reduction of risk and increased flexibility of a virtualised and upgraded infrastructure, the environmental benefits have been significant,” adds Terry Walby, Datacenter Solutions Director at Computacenter. “Our estimation is that the reduction in Aviva’s energy consumption through the decommissioning of legacy technology is in excess of 1.7 megawatt hours per annum.”

These factors all help Aviva to improve its competitive advantage and build customer loyalty and trust. “In such a demanding and crowded industry, it is essential that Aviva stands out. By increasing the efficiency of our internal operations and IT infrastructure, we are able to provide customers with a reliable and high quality service,” comments Steve.

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## More resources

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[www.computacenter.com/case-study](http://www.computacenter.com/case-study)