



Datacenter transformation saves Parity £300,000



Customer agenda

- Cost Reduction
- Growth/Business Change
- Continuous Improvement/Innovation

Services

- Platform Migration
- Datacenter Relocation
- Infrastructure Virtualisation
- Backup & Recovery
- Product Fulfilment Service

Technology

HP servers, VMware virtualisation software, ADIC tape library, NetApp storage solution

Customer overview

Parity is a business and IT technology services company. It delivers technical, resource and training solutions to public and private sector organisations across the UK, including the Cabinet Office, O2, Shell, AXA, Unilever, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department of Health.

Business need

Like most companies, IT - and in particular email - have become critical to the day-to-day operations of Parity. Although the availability of these systems is paramount, Parity must be able to balance IT performance with cost. David Conkleton, Managing Director for Parity Business Solutions, comments: "Profitability and business growth are currently key priorities for the business. Although IT requires ongoing investment, we felt there was potential to make our operation more cost-effective by changing both our outsourcing model and underlying infrastructure."

Parity was also keen to improve the availability of its data and core applications and increase operational efficiency by taking advantage of new datacenter technologies. As David explains: "The IT infrastructure was not as robust as it should have been, and this had started to impact business continuity and our staff. We wanted to be able to constantly drive cost efficiencies and improve our service levels to support business growth."

Solution

The opportunity to achieve these goals came when Parity signed up to a new five-year managed services contract with Computacenter. Fundamental to the agreement was the transformation of Parity's datacenter environment, which was based on 120 legacy servers, direct attached storage and local backup tapes. Andy Griffin, Head of IT, at Parity, comments: "Consolidation, virtualisation, standardisation and centralisation were all core themes of the transformation." The predicted cost savings of this change programme were written into the managed services contract, so Parity could reduce business risk and ensure a good return on investment.



By deploying a virtual server environment, we have been able to improve business agility and the availability of core applications.



Andy Griffin
Head of IT
Parity Business Solutions



The partnership with Computacenter has enabled us to embark on an IT transformation programme, which will reduce costs and drive the business forward.



David Conkleton
Managing Director
Parity Business Solutions

How Computacenter helped

Before it could begin work on the transformation, Computacenter first had to migrate Parity's applications from the old datacenter to the new environment, which it hosts on its clients' behalf.

The complexity of this relocation was exacerbated by very tight timescales. As Mark Ford, a Solutions Architect for Computacenter, explains: "We had to move the entire datacenter over the course of a single weekend. Maintaining business continuity throughout the transition was essential, as we were only permitted a maximum of 10 minutes downtime on Parity's website."

Following the successful migration, Computacenter set about designing the new datacenter infrastructure, which is founded on HP servers. These were selected using Computacenter Recommends programme, which is designed to help de-risk the procurement of new technology. By using VMware virtualisation software, Parity was able to reduce the number of new servers it required and dramatically improve utilisation rates, which had previously been as low as three per cent.

The transformation also involved rolling out a centralised storage and backup solution, as Andy explains: "We used to have to change up to 30 tapes a day, which was both inefficient and expensive in terms of hardware costs. The new infrastructure means that all our data is stored centrally and can be backed up in 4-5 hours instead of 9-10 hours."

Results

These efficiency gains are good news for Parity and its users, as it means the company's IT is more available and resilient. As David testifies: "We now have a more flexible, robust and scalable infrastructure. This not only aids business agility but also cost control."

The introduction of a rationalised and virtualised server infrastructure played a key role in achieving these financial benefits. "We used to buy a new server every time we needed to roll-out a new application," comments Andy. "Now we have the capacity to run 20 virtual servers on each physical device, which means we have been able to decrease our estate by two-thirds." This has enabled Computacenter to underwrite cost savings to Parity of more than £300,000 over the course of the contract.

The new datacenter infrastructure, which is monitored 24x7 by Computacenter, has also enhanced business agility and development. "We can now dedicate more IT staff to activities that drive the business forward," comments Andy. "The flexible and scalable architecture of the datacenter means that we can quickly adapt our systems to meet the needs of the business, which increases our competitive edge."

More resources

For more information on our transformation services, visit:

www.computacenter.com/services

Read more customer case studies at:

www.computacenter.com/case-study