

CAPITA

IT SERVICES

Pannone LLP

Server virtualisation for reduced costs, greater flexibility and higher availability



"Virtualisation of our server environment has not only solved our power, cooling and space issues, but has also enabled us to be much more responsive to business needs. We can now implement a new virtualised server in hours rather than days."

*Chris Styles, Senior Manager - IT
Pannone LLP*

Core contract value: Approx. £220,000

Start date: February 2008

Challenge

Pannone LLP is one of the UK's leading regional law firms and ComputerLand's challenge was to undertake virtualisation of Pannone's server infrastructure with minimal disruption to business, with the overall objective of reducing Pannone's ongoing costs as well as helping towards a disaster recovery strategy.

Solution

Through the implementation of a VMware Virtual Infrastructure together with storage (NetApp SAN) and HP Blade servers, Pannone now has a virtualised server infrastructure and the structure in place to implement a more comprehensive disaster recovery plan.

Results

The introduction of the virtualised server infrastructure has led to reduced running and maintenance costs. It has also paved the way for a full disaster recovery strategy as well as a virtualised desktop infrastructure.

Benefits

The ComputerLand* project has provided Pannone with a long-term server infrastructure solution that will also enable them to implement a more comprehensive disaster recovery strategy. The server virtualisation led to an immediate reduction in electricity usage and a significant reduction in the storage space needed.

Services

- Infrastructure Services including server virtualisation
- Back-up and storage
- Professional Services

Pannone LLP

Background

Pannone was running over 50 physical servers and wanted to investigate and potentially implement server virtualisation. Their aims were to reduce the ongoing power and cooling costs as well as reduce the amount of space required by the servers. They wished to look at the migration of their existing physical Windows servers into a virtualised infrastructure.

Solution

"We were recommended to work with ComputerLand but as a matter of professionalism we spoke to a number of other potential partners in order to thoroughly analyse the marketplace. However ComputerLand's enthusiasm matched our own and understanding of virtualisation technology as well as their technical ability made them the obvious choice. We knew we could trust them to deliver," comments Chris Styles, Senior Manager - IT at Pannone.

ComputerLand implemented the project following PRINCE 2 methodologies and initially undertook a review of the current environment comprising of 50 servers in total. The aim of the review was to gain an understanding of the potential consolidation ratio as well as identify the current hardware and the environment it occupied.

The project was split into three key areas; server virtualisation, storage and back up. The following was implemented:

Server virtualisation

ComputerLand proposed that the Windows based servers within the Pannone organization were virtualised through a VMware Virtual Infrastructure

implementation. Pannone looked long and hard at all the competing software vendors but it quickly became clear VMware was the best of breed.

We implemented the Enterprise Edition of the Virtual Infrastructure product to allow Pannone to take advantage of all VMware ESX Server's features. ComputerLand's proposal enabled Pannone to move from 50 servers down to only seven as follows:

- Five VMware ESX servers (in the same blade enclosure)
- One Virtual Centre server
- One Back-up server

Realising that much of the current hardware would be redundant, ComputerLand recommended that two of the existing HP ProLiant servers were re-utilized as the Virtual Centre server and the Virtual machine back-up.

Five HP ProLiant BL460 C-Class blades were recommended and deployed in a C7000 enclosure. Whilst the initial investment required for the C-Class blade solution was higher, Pannone could expect to see power and cooling savings of up to 30% per annum, compared to the same number of HP's latest DL380 G5 servers.

Throughout the design and implementation process, ComputerLand engineers worked with Pannone's internal IT team. Chris Styles of Pannone highlights, "The implementation was more of a collaboration project. It was important that we knew how everything was bolted together and brought online as we wanted to be able to complete further implementations ourselves, as well as manage the estate moving forward."



Since the initial implementation, Pannone has installed further virtualized servers to maintain flexibility as well as provide for the businesses continually expanding requirements.

Storage

ComputerLand recommended and deployed for Pannone a NetApp SAN (Storage Area Network). Chris Styles comments, "We had been using a different storage solution but looking at NetApp we were bowled over by its flexibility, expandability and its ease of management."

Back-up

ComputerLand's proposed method for back-up was fully supported by VMware and our chosen back-up

software vendor, Symantec. It took advantage of the Virtual Consolidated Back-up software included with the Enterprise Edition of Virtual Infrastructure.

The back-up solution used a Windows 2003 Back-up Proxy server, on which both VMware VCB and Symantec Back-up Exec Server for Windows were deployed.

The solution required a dedicated server for the Back-up Proxy, and so ComputerLand re-instated an existing server freed up through virtualisation for this purpose.

Results

"The ComputerLand engineers were very knowledgeable and very good at training our people on the technology. To an extent it was a no risk implementation as long as the set up was completed correctly. We worked well with ComputerLand and the project went very well. Even after the project was completed ComputerLand engineers were happy to answer any questions we had and were forthcoming with suggestions and ideas," continues Chris Styles of Pannone, "ComputerLand's recommendation of VMware on HP Blades with NetApp storage seemed like and is an excellent solution. NetApp and VMware are very supportive, as are ComputerLand; queries are listened to and responses are always positive."

Pannone now manages and runs the virtualised estate. More storage and servers have been added as the business has grown. "Because everything was specified correctly initially, we now have great flexibility in the system and adding additional hardware has been made easy; it's almost a case of plug it in and away we go," stated Chris Styles.

Looking to the future, Chris Styles and his team are already expanding their disaster recovery provision as well as looking at a virtual desktop infrastructure for additional flexibility. ComputerLand are key partners in these developments.

Benefits

"Our cooling and power issues have disappeared which is great. We're also much more able to react quickly to business needs. We can add a new virtualised server in hours rather than days," highlights Chris Styles.

Benefits of server virtualisation

- Reduced administration and maintenance
- Lower power and cooling costs
- Condensed space requirements by at least 50%
- Reduced carbon footprint due to lower electricity requirements
- Ability to lever new virtualised infrastructure for disaster recovery

** ComputerLand is now part of Capita IT Services.*

The Capita Group Plc
71 Victoria St
London SW1H 0XA

Tel: 020 7799 1525
Fax: 020 7799 1526

<http://www.capita-its.co.uk/>