

Onyx Group: The New Blade Runners!



Investment in storage and infrastructure gives publisher enhanced operational value. Inverness-based Scottish Provincial Press (SPP) is the largest publishing company in the North of Scotland, publishing thirteen weekly papers as well as magazines from business locations around the Scottish Highlands.

Escalating storage requirements and an ageing IT infrastructure saw SPP turning to Onyx Group for a major overhaul of their existing systems.

Background

First stage of the project was to address ageing hardware. Onyx Group recommended IBM blade centre technology with ten dual processor blade servers and a high-speed fibre channel SAN solution at each of their Inverness locations. These were built and configured offsite in Onyx Group's premises to allow system assurance to be carried out prior to full installation.

Next on the agenda was to migrate Windows NT to 2003 and upgrade the Exchange server from version 5.5 to 2003, as both earlier versions were approaching the end of Microsoft's extended product life support. This also involved deploying active directory services to replace the legacy Windows NT domains; its structure specifically designed to evolve as particular parts of the business were migrated and configured to ensure seamless access across old and new domains.

As SPP wanted to manage the new infrastructure in-house, the project included training key personnel to familiarise them with the operation, management and ongoing maintenance of all hardware and software.

Following full implementation, SPP installed Neverfail to provide high availability for the Exchange and SQL environment, guaranteeing resilience and 24/7 availability.

SPP say Onyx Group won the contract through their geographical coverage, their design and planning capabilities and their breadth of experience which allowed a complete end-to-end solution to be provided.

Solutions Overview

- Build and configure IBM blade technology and a SAN (storage area network) solution
- Create and deploy an active directory structure
- Migrate Microsoft exchange 5.5 to 2003 and Microsoft Windows NT to 2003
- Skills transfer to SPP technical staff
- Provide enhanced resilience with our high availability solution Neverfail
- Ongoing helpdesk support for the full infrastructure and network environment

Key Business Benefits

SPP's IT investment has improved the overall management of their messaging applications, simplified user administration, maximised system availability and delivered enhanced operational value. As a result, SPP's editorial staff have been able to move deadlines closer to publication dates, thus ensuring more up-to-the-minute news content.

"The project has gone very smoothly and the proposed solution has exceeded our expectations"

Kenny Brown
IT Manager, Scottish Provincial Press