



supporting blind and partially sighted people

INDUSTRY
Charity

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

Provide efficient storage and security for large library of talking books

Increase Staff productivity

Reduce response time to technical issues

BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

2 x NetApp FAS 3020C's, Fibre Channel & SATA disk, SnapMirror, SnapManager for SQL, SnapManager for Exchange, Open Systems Snapvault, VMware Dell Servers. Installation, Training and Support

BUSINESS BENEFITS

Improved scalability
Reduced administration overhead through centralised management of storage and backup

Improved business continuity

Protection of operational capability with site-wide disaster recovery

Increased efficiency through consolidation of server infrastructure

Reduced total cost of ownership

Royal National Institute of Blind People

The Customer

The RNIB, Royal National Institute of Blind People is the UK's leading charity for people with sight problems. It provides information, advice and support to over 2 million people, including practical help and supply of Braille and talking books. The RNIB also fights for equal rights for people with sight problems and funds pioneering research into the prevention and treatment of eye disease.

The Challenge

The incumbent infrastructure at RNIB was not meeting the demands placed on it by the growing business. With no overall strategic approach to data management or server deployment the server architecture had become distributed with was no global business continuity. There were also no data recovery procedures other than tape based backups.

Departmental responsibilities for application deployment and management were difficult to co-ordinate, which resulted in further fragmentation of the infrastructure. The entire data management, storage and back-up strategy needed to be redefined in order to meet the demands of the organisation.

Specific issues that RNIB identified to resolve included:

- **Commercial objectives** – Efficient digital storage and security for their large library of talking books would be essential to improving business performance.
- **Staff productivity** – with limited human resources, IT problems were compromising their ability to carry out vital customer-facing work.
- **General efficiency** – Excessive time was being spent on technical issues, and the speed and performance of their IT facilities was impacting negatively on business efficiency.

"Alpha's expertise in data management has enabled us to work strategically and develop a new infrastructure to resolve our commercial and technical IT challenges. Their project management skills in particular have helped us to produce consistently successful solution implementations, and it was very beneficial to work with a single source of supply in a multi-vendor environment. As a commercially-based charity, we are now much more proactive and are making far better use of our staff's time. Work that once took a whole day with a physical server can now be done in an hour with a virtual server; downtime is much lower and the improved efficiency of our IT systems has generated improved efficiency for our whole organisation. All this is down to Alpha's understanding of our business objectives and their ability to deliver relevant, effective solutions."

David Mould - Operations Manager, IKS Operations Resources Group



The Solution

After a thorough review and investigation of the RNIB's requirements, Alpha installed and implemented a variety of hardware and software solutions. The Alpha team planned and managed each stage of the project, which comprised of:

- Consolidation of data storage infrastructure
- Implementation of tiered storage (FC + SATA)
- Provision of Business Continuance (Clustered systems)
- Provision of Disaster Recovery (Site replication)
- Consolidation and virtualisation of server infrastructure with VMware
- Implementation of global data management and server strategy for core business applications

RNIB invested in a NetApp unified storage solution that simplifies its storage infrastructure by simultaneously supporting both network-attached storage (NAS) and storage area network (SAN) data formats.

Highly flexible NetApp systems provide NAS support for the RNIB's file infrastructure whilst the NetApp iSCSI SAN solution provides what appears to be localised storage. This enables SQL database and Web servers to communicate over the company's existing IP infrastructure using standard SCSI storage commands while gaining the benefits of networked storage.

Another key advantage of the solution was NetApp Snapshot™ technology, a feature of the NetApp Data ONTAP™ operating system. Snapshot copies are consistent, read-only versions of data, which reflect only the information that has changed since the previous Snapshot copy was taken. This technology minimises the bandwidth required to mirror data between sites while ensuring that in the case of a catastrophic outage no more than a few minutes worth of work would be lost.

RNIB host the mission critical applications and data on VMware server farms, which provide the flexibility required for the business growth whilst also utilising high level features for data availability and business continuity.

The virtualised server and data management strategy now provides RNIB with the platform to integrate new business systems and also legacy systems as and when they are decommissioned. This flexibility and effortlessness scalability significantly reduces the total cost of ownership and enables RNIB to proactively plan for future requirements.

Benefits for the RNIB

- Improved scalability
- Reduced administration overhead through centralised management of storage and backup
- Improved business continuity
- Greater data security through consolidated backups
- Protection of operational capability with site-wide disaster recovery
- Increased efficiency through consolidation of server infrastructure
- Single point of ownership and support from Alpha
- Reduced total cost of ownership

About Alpha

Alpha is a leading supplier of data management solutions. Established in 1981, Alpha provides its UK wide customer base with the peace of mind that their data is safe.

Maximising return on your investment from data management implementations takes experience, commitment and a passion for excellence. Alpha makes it simple and affordable for customers to implement enterprise class data management solutions all through a single, experienced provider.



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