

“The SAN e-mail management solution is one of the best examples of a value adding service...Fujitsu realised the problem, identified a solution and fitted it around our business needs.”

Paul Reynolds – Director ICT Services, Department for Business Innovation & Skills



SUMMARY OF KEY FACTS

Organisation

Department for Business Innovation & Skills (BIS)

Services delivered

Development and implementation of a new Storage Area Network (SAN) and e-mail archiving and management solution, based on Symantec's Enterprise Vault software and Fujitsu's Eternus SAN Storage System

Key metrics

- 27 office locations
- 5,500 employees

Benefits

- **Improved data management** – can proactively control e-mail growth and centrally manage corporate knowledge
- **Enhanced user productivity** – can quickly and transparently access all current and archived e-mail
- **Reduced risk** – can recover quickly in the event of a server failure and most data is now held in a fully managed environment, providing greater security, business continuity and disaster recovery capabilities
- **Legal compliance** – new processes enforce Freedom of Information and Data Protection regulations
- **Enhanced business image** – the use of advanced technology supports the BIS' thought leadership role

Challenge

The Department for Business Innovation & Skills (BIS) is the UK government department responsible for building Britain's future economic strengths by creating a regulatory environment that encourages enterprise, skilled people, innovation, and world-class science and research.

In 1998 BIS, formerly known as the Department of Trade & Industry (DTI) and subsequently Department for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform (BERR), awarded Fujitsu a 10 year contract, subsequently extended to 2014, under which Fujitsu took ownership of the Department's existing IT assets and related services and responsibility for optimising operational performance.

Paul Reynolds, Director ICT Services, BIS, says, *“Like many organisations, we had a growing problem with our ever increasing e-mail storage, which had grown to over three Terabytes of data. The need to respond to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests with complete information from across the Department, meant that our e-mail was a key source of data and yet it was stored in different ways and in different desktop and server environments. This lack of centralised storage and archiving also meant that there was a considerable risk of business disruption, should we experience server or power failures for whatever reason.”*

Solution

To address its e-mail storage and management requirements the Department looked at a number of possible solutions that would enable it to enforce a new e-mail archiving and deletion policy, improve information retrieval and free up expensive server storage space. On Fujitsu's recommendation, it chose to implement a Storage Area Network (SAN) and archive solution, using Symantec's Enterprise Vault software.

Paul Reynolds continues, *“When we initially tried out the Enterprise Vault software we weren't very comfortable with the amount of training required, but Fujitsu was flexible enough to say ‘this won't work, let's try another way’.”* So, using its knowledge of the Enterprise Vault software, Fujitsu quickly suggested and integrated an alternative user interface to the Exchange e-mail system which avoided the need for significant training.

Next, having jointly conducted a full market evaluation, the Eternus SAN storage solution was chosen, because it offered the best value for money. It was also part of Fujitsu's TRIOLE methodology, so the components were already thoroughly pre-tested, documented and known to work with each other in the required configuration, dramatically reducing costs

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and implementation timescales. As a result, Fujitsu created two separate SANs in its northern and southern data centres in just six weeks.

Paul Reynolds comments, *“The SANs were implemented very quickly, and we didn’t see any of the technical stuff, which is fantastic given that millions of e-mails had to be synchronised, translated, verified and migrated to both data centres one at a time and without interruption to our staff! It really was a significant technical data migration.”*

All 5,500 staff are now using the SAN solution and BIS is looking to reduce the amount of data held on its Microsoft Exchange servers still further, as Paul Reynolds explains, *“Access to e-mails is now fantastic – pretty close to instantaneous, wherever they are stored, so unless you are specifically looking for something over 90 days old you don’t even know it’s held in the Enterprise Vault. As a result, we’d like to cut the time e-mails are held in Exchange down to just 30 days as this will reduce server storage costs even further, improve recovery times and make things much less complex.”*

“However, I have to say that when Fujitsu first proposed the use of a SAN we had some concerns as I’d heard a few horror stories about other people’s projects. Despite our initial reservations and the fact that it had to meet some very tight timescales, Fujitsu came along with a SAN solution and showed that it worked. From our perspective it was very simple and transparent, so I’m much more of a fan of SAN now and definitely think it’s the way to go in other parts of the organisation. In fact, while this was the first implementation in government of an e-mail management system using this type of seamlessly integrated SAN storage, I believe that other government departments are also now looking at using this solution.”

Benefits

The SAN project was funded by Fujitsu under its outsourcing contract, but is providing BIS with considerable cost and efficiency benefits:

- **Improved data management** – can proactively control growth in e-mail storage and user accounts, and centrally manage valuable corporate information and knowledge
- **Enhanced user productivity** – can quickly and transparently access all current and archived e-mail
- **Reduced risk** – less reliant on server storage, so can recover quickly in the event of a failure. Most data is also now held off site in a fully managed environment, providing greater security, business continuity and disaster recovery capabilities
- **Legal compliance** – new processes enforce Freedom of Information and Data Protection regulations
- **Enhanced business image** – the use of advanced technology supports BIS’ thought leadership role

“The SAN e-mail management solution developed by Fujitsu is one of the best examples of a value adding service,” says Paul Reynolds. *“Fujitsu wasn’t contractually required to do anything about the growth in e-mail usage – both parties could have left things as they were and when we had a system failure just sat around moaning about it! But Fujitsu realised the problem, identified a solution and fitted it around our business needs.”*

“As a result, we can now manage our e-mail data better and are more complaint with FOI requirements for its storage and retrieval. One of the other bonuses of this project is that we are now much more confident in undertaking complex technical change programmes, because we’ve proved that they can be successful. You don’t embark on something like this lightly, but we now have the confidence to do something like this again despite the fact that it is technically difficult to do.”

Approach

The Department’s planned e-mail management policy was for e-mails to remain on the Microsoft Exchange servers for 90 days, after which users should save them into the Enterprise Vault system. Once they were a year old e-mails would then be moved into the existing Electronic Document Records Management (EDRM) system for long term storage. Any e-mails not stored in one of these three areas would automatically be deleted.

The policy was scheduled to go live in November 2005, so from June 2005 a communications programme was initiated in order to educate users and to start getting them to either delete unwanted e-mails or move them into the EDRM system. *“We started with some low key communication, which set soft limits and targeted high volume users,”* explains Paul Reynolds. *“We also started deleting old groups and users, which enabled us to get rid of around 5,000 accounts and associated data. We then ratcheted up the communications in e-mails, magazine articles and posters, while tightening the usage limits. The fact that usage of our EDRM system shot through the roof showed that our communication programme worked!”*

“A pilot of the new system found very few problems so we decided to go for full migration, but the implementation was completely transparent to the users. In fact, we got hardly any calls and the problems we did have were minor and got resolved very quickly.”

Expertise

With over 30 years experience of supporting the needs of customers, Fujitsu has a proven track record in providing complex systems integration and management services that reduce costs, improve productivity and customer services and deliver a compelling return on investment.

“The development of the SAN solution is a good example of a genuine joint effort in identifying a business problem and finding an appropriate solution that really worked. Fujitsu understood our business drivers and we understood the technical drivers, and together we made it work with some strong project management,” comments Paul Reynolds.

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