²**gether**
Making life better

"Fujitsu Cluster-in-a-box has changed how we do business for the better and leaves us well placed to handle the changing demands of the healthcare industry."

Tim Mullan
Deputy IT Systems & Programme Manager
²gether NHS Trust

²gether NHS Trust deployed four PRIMEFLEX® Cluster-in-a-box solutions to simplify management, reduce costs, improve responsiveness and maximise availability.

At a glance
Country: United Kingdom
Industry: Healthcare
Founded: 2007
Employees: 2,300
Website: www.2gether.nhs.uk

Challenge
²gether NHS Trust had been using a shared service data centre but found it both expensive and slow, with new server deployment taking far too long. It wanted to find a cost-effective, in-house storage and server solution that would provide more flexibility.

Solution
The Trust deployed four FUJITSU Integrated System PRIMEFLEX® Cluster-in-a-box solutions, which offer a complete, pre-integrated environment that's engineered for simple and straightforward virtualisation straight out of the box.

Benefit
- Cut operational costs by 50 per cent meaning funds can be redirected towards new initiatives
- Improved clinical productivity thanks to more reliable performance and 24/7 availability
- Simple management frees up the IT team to concentrate on more strategic tasks
- New virtual machines can be provisioned in minutes rather than months

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Customer

²gether NHS Foundation Trust (²gether) provides specialist mental health and learning disability services to the people of Gloucestershire and Herefordshire. It serves a combined population of 761,000 people who live within 1,900 square miles of rural and urban landscape. Ninety-six per cent of its services are provided within the community and as close to an individual's family and friends as possible – an essential factor in helping to improve a person's recovery.

Products and services

- FUJITSU Integrated System PRIMEFLEX® Cluster-in-a-box

Challenge

²gether had relied on a blend of physical and virtual servers located in a shared service data centre that operates within the wider NHS community. This set-up came with implications for both responsiveness and cost because it often required the purchase of physical servers.

"It took time to provision new machines and involved OPEX expenditure which we wanted to avoid so, naturally, we thought about bringing our server and storage platform in-house instead," explains Tim Mullan, Deputy IT Systems & Programme Manager, ²gether NHS Foundation Trust. "This would allow us to be much more agile and flexible while also cutting costs."

The Trust wanted a simple converged solution that could scale up and down as needed, so went to market to evaluate what was on offer. Initially, Tim and his team felt disappointment at the complicated solutions provided by most vendors.

"We just wanted a managed storage/compute environment that we could slot in as and when required without the usual headaches of switches and bottlenecks. However, there always appeared to be various types of service overlay involved which we simply weren't interested in," adds Mullan. "We then came across Fujitsu, which provided a clear, uncluttered solution with no unnecessary extras. We were convinced that the Fujitsu Cluster-in-a-box would work for us."

Solution

FUJITSU Integrated System PRIMEFLEX Cluster-in-a-box delivers a complete, pre-integrated environment that's engineered for simple and straightforward virtualisation – straight out of the box. Built with smaller businesses and branch offices in mind, it removes the need for specialist IT skills and delivers a complete solution that enabled ²gether to go to a virtualised IT environment rapidly.

²gether bought a single PRIMEFLEX Cluster-in-a-box to test its viability and migrated a number of virtual machines. When it was confident the system was robust and flexible enough to meet its needs, the Trust purchased three additional units which are deployed across both counties.

"Migrating from the shared data centre to the new Fujitsu platform was simple as we have a good technical team and a range of tools to enable virtual to virtual migration," says Mullan. "Because we have four connected systems, it gives us phenomenal resilience in the event of failure."

Together, these Fujitsu solutions support several core business functions and multiple applications, including Digital Dictation services, Datix risk management, domain controllers and print servers.

"The Fujitsu solution met our cost criteria while also offering all the functionality we need," continues Mullan. "It does exactly what it says on the tin."

Benefit

²gether is experiencing numerous benefits since moving to the Fujitsu platform, from lower costs to increased responsiveness and improved availability. New virtual machines can be provisioned in minutes rather than months while application licencing has become much simpler.

"Buying a single data centre licence for MS Systems Center, for example, is much more cost-effective. Overall, we have cut our operational costs by 50 per cent, which is funding that can be redeployed elsewhere," comments Mullan. "And we now have always-on availability across multiple sites whereas previously we often suffered from down time."

The availability and performance have a knock-on effect on clinical productivity – by having 24/7 fast access to the services they require, doctors and nurses can look after patients more effectively. Furthermore, by redirecting the money saved by PRIMEFLEX Cluster-in-a-box into a mobile working initiative, the Trust is giving clinicians new tools to become even more productive.

"Mobile working allows doctors to update notes securely on the road so they don't have to constantly keep coming back to the office, which means they can see more people per day," remarks Mullan. "The Fujitsu deployment really helped us become more agile."

The Fujitsu solution doesn't only cut costs, it also requires far less attention from Mullan and his team, freeing them up to focus on other areas, such as automation. It can also scale up and down to meet the changing needs of the sector with minimal extra cost.

"By having all our IT components within a single landscape, manageability has dramatically improved and service delivery has become markedly more efficient," concludes Mullan. "The Cluster-in-a-box has changed how we do business for the better and leaves us well placed to handle the changing demands of the healthcare industry."

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