

“The main benefit of moving to Fujitsu and their VME services is risk mitigation. In moving to Fujitsu from our incumbent provider we get access to a very rare resource base for VME development and support.”

Anthony Chin
Head of Technology - Finance Systems
ITV

Fujitsu has provided ITV with a stable, high-performing Artist Payment System wrapped with management and maintenance services.

At a glance

Country: United Kingdom
Industry: Broadcasting
Founded: 1955
Employees: 4,000+
Website: www.itv.com

Challenge

ITV's long standing Artist Payment System (APS) is a VME application. It was challenged with how to provide ongoing support and maintenance due to lack of VME skills in the market, and the fact that VME will only be available as Fujitsu service after 2020. The company needed to find a new way to support this vital business application and enable ongoing development and migration off VME.

Solution

ITV chose to migrate the APS to a Fujitsu application management and infrastructure solution and services which would secure the future and provide comprehensive support.

Benefit

- The critical APS is now future-proofed and wrapped with management and maintenance services provided by Fujitsu
- Time-sensitive migration was completed within the target three months
- Application performance has improved

Customer

ITV is an integrated producer broadcaster and the largest commercial television network in the UK. It is the home of popular television from the biggest entertainment events, to original drama, major sport, landmark factual series and independent news. It operates a family of channels including ITV, ITVBe, ITV2, ITV3 and ITV4 and CITV, which are broadcast free-to-air, as well as the pay channel ITV Encore. ITV is also focused on delivering its programming across multiple platforms including itv.com, mobile devices, video on demand and third party platforms.

Products and services

- FUJITSU Application Services
- FUJITSU Managed Infrastructure Services
- FUJITSU Service Desk Hardware maintenance services

Challenge

ITV receives revenue from advertising, its online, pay and interactive business as well as from the production and sales of the programmes it creates and holds rights to. Talent payments are processed by the ITV Artist Payment System (APS), which was originally developed in 1987 by Granada Studios and later adopted by the whole network when it merged in the 1990s.

“The APS is a fundamentally important part of our business so we cannot afford to have any downtime,” explains Anthony Chin, Head of Technology - Finance Systems at ITV. “It came to my attention that Fujitsu had recently begun to offer direct support of the VME environment, which immediately gave us the option of working directly with the supplier.”

The rationale was that removing the middle-man would mitigate risk while also providing a one stop shop for hosting, application maintenance and support.

Solution

This project was not a simple migration as it involved building out the VME solution within new data centres at Fujitsu. There were also numerous issues around intellectual property rights, not to mention the need for re-documenting an application almost 30 years old.

“We couldn't just lift and shift the APS as certain elements of the VME solution remained the IP of the incumbent provider. We therefore had to strip out those elements we couldn't take, redevelop them within Fujitsu and port across the application code and data – all without interrupting our payments schedules. We set ourselves a tight time frame of three months to perform this with the help of Fujitsu engineers,” says Anthony. “Through close collaboration with Fujitsu and our existing third party host, we planned a meticulous migration of the application and data.”

The team consisted of twelve Fujitsu engineers as well as five internal ITV employees and three from the third party.

With this collaboration, the migration was completed in a number of phases over three months. Fujitsu also introduced a new service desk function to provide ongoing support 24/7. Given the complex nature of the APS, this was no mean feat.

“The Fujitsu team compared the complexity of this system with a major UK Government VME system, which gives some idea of how complicated and vast it is,” adds Anthony. “We ran the two systems in parallel and then made the final switch; this allowed us to hit the ground running without disrupting the business.”

Benefit

ITV has now eradicated the inherent risk of running such a vital part of its business on an aging application with limited internal resources.

“The main benefit is risk mitigation, giving us a path where we can keep the application running while Fujitsu can continue to evolve the underlying technology,” continues Anthony.

As Fujitsu is responsible for managing the solution, ITV no longer needs to allocate internal resources, freeing up manpower for use elsewhere. As a result, ITV's talent can continue to be paid on time and, as the company's business model adapts to a changing media landscape, the APS solution can respond accordingly.

Fujitsu has provided ITV with a stable, high-performing APS solution with the confidence and commitment that it will manage and maintain this solution until a replacement technology has been successfully put in place.

“By moving this system to Fujitsu, we have built a good relationship that will support us whatever we decide to do in the future. As our industry changes, we will be well positioned to develop our core business processes in response. From a business and technical perspective, our experience has been very positive. Fujitsu helped us complete a full transition of a critical part of the business,” concludes Anthony.

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