

"Using the cloud means that I now access my own desktop from anywhere in the world, meaning that I always have access to my business applications whenever I need them"

Julian Cooper, Business Development Manager
Clarendon



[Codestone Cloud & SystemSure Support]

Clarendon Case Study

Project Summary

Client: Clarendon
Industry: Serviced Offices
Location: National, England
Solution: Codestone Cloud & SystemSure

Key Benefits:

- High Availability
- Increased Security
- Disaster Recovery
- Lower Capital Costs
- Lower Total Cost of Ownership (TCO)
- Data Protection
- Faster Return on Investment (ROI)
- Managed Service
- Future Proof
- Environmentally Sound

Products:

- Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS)
- Desktops as a Service (DaaS)
- Backup as a Service (BaaS)

Background

Established in 1998 and with 11 sites located throughout the south of England, Clarendon Business Centres provide both fledgling and established businesses with hassle free and cost effective serviced, managed and virtual office space.

Clarendon's approach means that their Customers only pay for the space that they use and only commit for the length of term required. There's no up front capital expenditure and their solution can be scaled up or down as needed. In addition to serviced office space, their business centres offer modern and well equipped meeting and conference facilities, as well as virtual office, mail handling and call diversion services.

The Challenge

Clarendon's legacy infrastructure consisted of a Windows Small Business Server 2003 domain containing two domain controllers and a number of other infrastructure services controlling a centralised door-locking system and a call logging system. User access was provided through standard Windows XP based desktop 'fat clients' and utilized VPN connections between sites.

This infrastructure relied on disparate server workloads based at multiple UK sites, that required cross centre synchronization and data transfer over various qualities of internet connection. The success of this method was erratic and often crashed, which was detrimental to the smooth running of the business. Critical applications such as Clarendon's billing platform and the accuracy of their accounting system were constantly being compromised.

Clarendon's 30 employees often need to work from home or any of their multiple business centre sites and found it difficult to access their specific applications. Some staff needed to be supplied with laptop computers and required multiple logins to access key information.

In addition, Clarendon also wanted to implement best practice security for user access to their systems and data.

The Solution

After Consultation with Codestone's infrastructure experts, a hosted, managed & uniformed cloud-based desktop and server solution for Clarendon was proposed and agreed. This solution migrated the majority of back-end services to the Codestone cloud platform, whilst keeping services like their call logging system, with its physical dependency on the local phone system, on-site. Hardware refreshes became obsolete as Clarendon utilized Codestone Cloud and now rent compute power inline with their needs.

All Clarendon users now access business critical applications over the internet via a web browser, gaining access to their centralised desktop using Citrix XenApp and Citrix Access Gateway; ensuring that, regardless of their location, they can always get fast and secure access (subject to company policies).

Infrastructure as a service essentially uses a commoditised computing model, allowing organisations such as Clarendon to pay only for the computing resource they use. This model also zeros both the software and hardware capital investment required to implement the very latest and best of breed software solutions.

Software and computer power is rented, giving the customer access to the latest versions of the applications and allowing simple calculation of the maximum per-user costs. Once this figure is established, the customer can easily budget for and add new users as the business grows.

The Codestone Cloud platform is built using best of breed, Enterprise Class products from Citrix, VMware, Microsoft and EMC. Owned and managed by Codestone, using no 3rd party infrastructure, the platform supports both Windows and Linux environments.

Implementation

Once Clarendon had agreed a scope of works with Codestone's industry leading Consultants, Codestone's fully accredited Prince 2 Project Managers set about scheduling the project delivery around Clarendon's business critical timelines.

Codestone's Head of Projects, Rob Joyce explained

"Clarendon's Cloud migration project, as with all Codestone projects, had to be meticulously planned to assure its success. We took the time to ensure that all Clarendon's stakeholders expectations, including their existing IT Supplier, were aligned and that the project plan allowed for a smooth transition with minimum disruption to the business."

The implementation took place over a 3 week period and included the build and provision of new cloud based servers, migration of data from the in-house SBS 2003 server to a hosted SBS 2008 server and the provision of hosted desktops for 20 users; all of which were fully tested before go live.

Benefits

Clarendon's Managing Director, Julian Cooper, stated

"The impact from our investment was immediate. The software integration is now infinitely more reliable, especially links to Sage when transferring billing information. This inherently carried a risk and relied on a fallible human element to retrospectively check transfers."



"Users are now able to work more effectively from any location, which has increased productivity. Also with this Citrix infrastructure we can turn Macs into PCs when required. For example, when travelling I can now access our invoice approval application using my iPad, enhancing business continuity"

"Using the cloud means that I now access my own desktop from anywhere in the world, enabling access to our business applications whenever I need them."

High Availability

The Cloud platform is built so that it has no single point of failure, unlike an "on premise - 1 server per application" solution. The data centre itself has redundant power, cooling, bandwidth and fire suppression, giving Clarendon unparalleled up time (99.9% guaranteed).

Security

The Codestone Cloud platform is delivered from a secure, purpose built data centre with state of the art access security.

Disaster Recovery

Clarendon's Servers are accessible from any device, anywhere and over any connection, meaning critical services are still available in the event of a loss of the main business site and allowing full access for remote users.

Lower Capital Cost

All software and computing power was provided to Clarendon as a manageable monthly service (Opex not Capex). Clarendon also benefit from improved gearing as they now have fewer depreciating IT assets on their balance sheet.

Data Protection

All application data is fully backed up on a daily basis as part of the managed service. Julian said

"I enjoy total peace of mind that all our data is safe and backed up."

Faster Return on Investment (ROI)

Low capital cost means Clarendon will start benefitting from the investment immediately.

Managed Service

SystemSure Total includes maintenance, back up and user support giving Clarendon a "zero touch" solution.

Future Proof

Codestone Cloud will always deliver the latest versions of vendor software, resulting in Clarendon's infrastructure being future proof.

Environmentally Sound

Clarendon have reduced their company carbon footprint as the Codestone Cloud uses the latest energy saving hardware to reduce power and cooling costs.

Codestone

When asked how he would rate Codestone services overall, Julian said,

"Excellent. The thoroughness of the analysis pre switch was reassuring and paid off. They communicated well with our existing suppliers to help the smooth transition. Feedback from our other software suppliers was very good and they evidently believed in the benefits the cloud solution offered both to us and their software."

In closing

In giving advice to companies who faced similar challenges Julian said

"Whilst the new infrastructure solved many of our challenges, I do feel that any one of them may be enough of a reason for a company to switch to Cloud based solution. Having realised the benefits of this technology I foresee most companies eventually moving to this cloud based model."