



Rok reduces server estate by 75 per cent with virtualisation project and transformational outsourcing

Property repair and maintenance specialist Rok has cut its server estate by 75 per cent following a datacentre virtualisation project carried out in partnership with Computacenter. The transformation is part of a wider IT services agreement with Computacenter that will help Rok meet its environmental goals while aiding cost control and business continuity and offering increased business agility.

Rok has 5,000 employees and 60 offices in the UK. Known as 'the Nation's Local Builder™', the company employs local people to work within their own communities. Rok works with seven out of 10 of the UK's leading insurance companies and specialises in social housing, maintenance and plumbing, heating and electrical services.

As a result of the IT transformation, Rok has decreased its server estate from 80 to just 20 physical devices, which host 76 virtual machines. Claire Hamon, Chief Information Officer at Rok, commented: "By increasing server utilisation through virtualisation, we are able to minimise datacentre costs for maintenance, power and cooling.

"The datacentre is core to our ability to provide Rok's diverse and widely dispersed

employee base with continuous access to all our business-critical systems, such as email, and the proactive management of our finances."

The partnership with Computacenter commenced in June 2008 following an extensive request for proposal (RFP) process and was followed by the transformation project.

The three-year contract is based on a utility infrastructure model with costs based on a per-unit basis for servers and storage capacity. This enables Rok to implement additional computational power or storage capacity in a very short timeframe.

Mark Howling, Director, Services and Solutions at Computacenter commented, "In today's economic climate, the ability to accurately predict future costs is essential. Our utility infrastructure services are based on a standard pricing model to provide total financial transparency and flexibility."

As part of the datacentre hosting agreement, Rok also has access to a new storage environment based on best-of-breed technology that has the capacity to grow almost indefinitely without the need for costly upgrades.

The service provided by Computacenter includes comprehensive disaster recovery capacity that enables Rok to recover its core systems in just two hours using real-time data replication.

"The new disaster recovery environment offers much greater reliability, which is crucial to business continuity as we become increasingly reliant upon our IT systems," commented Claire.

Computacenter also provides a framework procurement agreement for all hardware purchases and is responsible for supporting Rok's Microsoft Exchange email environment, which comprises 3,000 mailboxes.

"Partnering with Computacenter enables us to access best practice processes and skilled resources while retaining a cost-effective and flexible contract," commented Claire. "We also felt that Computacenter was a good cultural match, with a similar ethos and equally strong focus on corporate social responsibility."