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Transformational Project for World Class Resort Hotel

IT infrastructure upgrade ahead of world leaders' attendance at 2014 NATO summit

Celtic Manor, Wales' multi-award winning resort hotel (including Ultimate UK Golf Resort and Best UK Hotel) is no stranger to hosting prestigious events. But when it was named as the venue for the forthcoming 2014 NATO summit, the Facilities and IT teams agreed the resort's infrastructure would need a full review to cope with the demands of such a sensitive event. "It was an important time – we had a lot of physical servers that were due for replacement," says Chris Stanley, Assistant IT Manager. "And we needed to upgrade our disaster recovery capability, so we asked ComputerWorld to help us find the right solution."

Dell end-to-end solution consisting of PowerEdge, EqualLogic, S-series & N-series Networking and SonicWALL.

Project at-a-glance

CHALLENGE
- Systems upgrade for prestige resort hotel

TECHNICAL SOLUTION
- Dell PowerEdge R620/R720XD servers
- Dell Storage PS4100X/PS4100XV arrays
- Dell Networking S4810 and N2048 switches
- Dell SonicWall NSA 4600 and 250M network security appliances
- VMware vSphere 5.5
- Veeam Enterprise Back-up & Replication

BENEFITS
- Resilience improved
- Faster back-end systems
- Reduced power consumption costs
- Lower upgrade costs in the future
- Reduced maintenance costs
- Faster updates and roll-outs
- Security improved

TIMELINE
- ComputerWorld briefed   March 2014
- Phase one scoping (initial virtualisation, partial network refresh & disaster recovery foundation)   May 2014
- Phase one delivery July 2014
- Phase two (further server virtualisation)   August 2014
- NATO Summit   4-5 Sept 2014

Virtualisation & Cloud | **Microsoft Technologies** | **End User Computing** | **Wire & Wireless Networking** | **Unified Comms & Collaboration**

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"The support we've had from ComputerWorld has been fantastic"

Chris Stanley – Assistant IT manager, Celtic Manor

A phased approach

ComputerWorld worked with the Celtic Manor team to assess the existing systems and their usage to scope a solution that would address pressing issues while also providing the opportunity to expand. Dozens of aging HP servers would be replaced (virtualised) and a partial network refresh was urgently required while also establishing the foundations of a significant disaster recovery solution. ComputerWorld proposed Dell-based storage and switching with VMware and Veeam for back-up and replication.

The less business-critical systems would remain outside scope for the first phase to enable the Celtic Manor team to assess the benefits of virtualisation and the move to ComputerWorld's recommended Dell environment.

Working side-by-side

Delivery of the first phase saw ComputerWorld's engineers working with the Celtic Manor IT team to ensure that as well as a trouble-free migration, the running of the system thereafter would be as smooth as possible.

Benefits of virtualisation

Upgrades and testing are now much faster, the system's back-end performance has been dramatically improved and the system brings significant savings in terms of power utilisation and year-on-year replacements.

Upgrade!

The first phase was so successful that the Celtic Manor team felt confident expanding the brief. "Everything worked and so we were convinced we could go further," says Chris Stanley, Celtic Manor's Assistant IT Manager. "When you find a credible partner who clearly deliver it makes sense to listen to their advice." The majority of the hotel's servers and systems have now been brought into the virtualised environment by ComputerWorld.

Twice the resilience

The complete solution is now based over two data centres, giving Celtic Manor replication of their virtual machines in a disaster recovery data centre. This means even in the event of a major event (such as fire) they can always recover their systems – a key objective of the project.

Fit for a president

When the world looked on as Barack Obama, David Cameron, Angela Merkel, Francois Hollande and other leaders benefited from the resort facilities, the Celtic Manor team were comfortable in the knowledge that their systems were resilient and reliable.

Ongoing support

Celtic Manor know they can call on ComputerWorld whenever they need help and guidance. "The support we have had since we began our relationship with ComputerWorld has been fantastic," says Assistant IT Manager Chris Stanley, "when we're extremely busy, knowing there's someone there, freeing our time to concentrate on other areas – it's a huge benefit."

Getting it right

One of the main success factors of the Celtic Manor systems project was the detailed discovery process undertaken in conjunction with the Celtic Manor team. This forensic understanding of the existing systems enabled the CW team to segment the upgrade project, stay within budget and ensure that when Celtic Manor wanted to go further with virtualisation, the right foundations were already in place.

"Our time has been freed up so we can concentrate on other things"

Chris Stanley – Assistant IT manager, Celtic Manor