

— Case Study

Delivering a **cost-effective** cloud strategy with Microsoft and managed services

Ripple Effect





— As a forward-thinking charity, **Send a Cow** wanted to partner with an innovative MSP to securely transform with Microsoft 365 & Azure.

Ripple Effect (formerly known as 'Send a Cow') was set up in 1988 by a group of dairy farmers who had a simple idea of sending livestock to Africa to give farmers and their families control of their own land and of their own futures. Over their 30-year history, Ripple Effect have transformed the lives of 2 million people in Africa and have expanded their operations from originally sending livestock, to establishing rural country programmes across six African countries. As part of this transformation, Buro Happold recognised the need to evolve their cyber security and worked with Chorus to develop an appropriate best-practice Zero Trust cyber security strategy using Microsoft 365.

Challenges

- ❖ Lack of strategic direction and support from existing Managed Service Provider
- ❖ Desire to implement modern technologies whilst being mindful of costs as a charity
- ❖ Need to modernise security and transform remote working and management

Goals

- ❖ Modernise use of technology and implement an innovative IT strategy that makes best use of cloud services
- ❖ Develop a strong relationship with an IT partner to complement internal IT team capabilities
- ❖ Optimise costs and take advantage of the available charity discounts

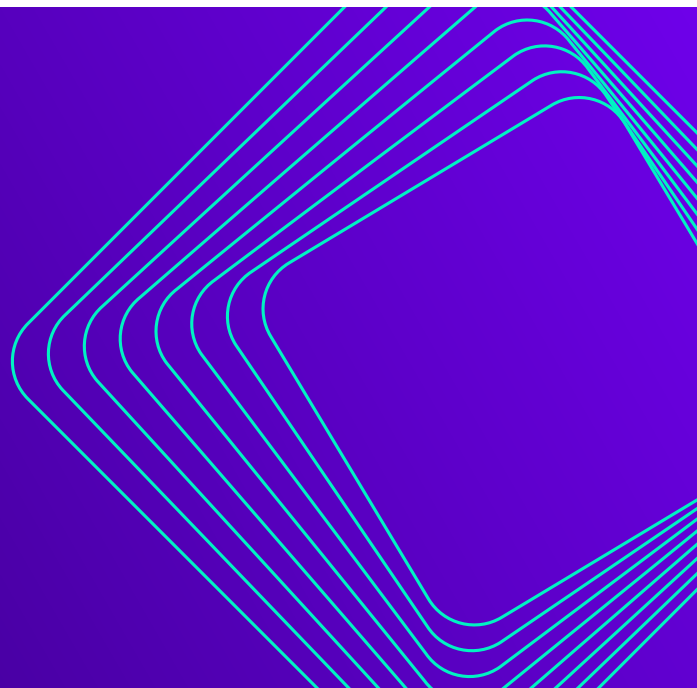
Solutions

- ❖ IT managed service partnership with a strategic focus on transformation and continuous improvement
- ❖ Cloud-first roadmap developed with migration to Microsoft 365 and Azure
- ❖ Use of Microsoft charity discounts, Azure Reserved Instances, and scheduled automations to optimise costs within Azure



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Ripple Effect, Head of IT



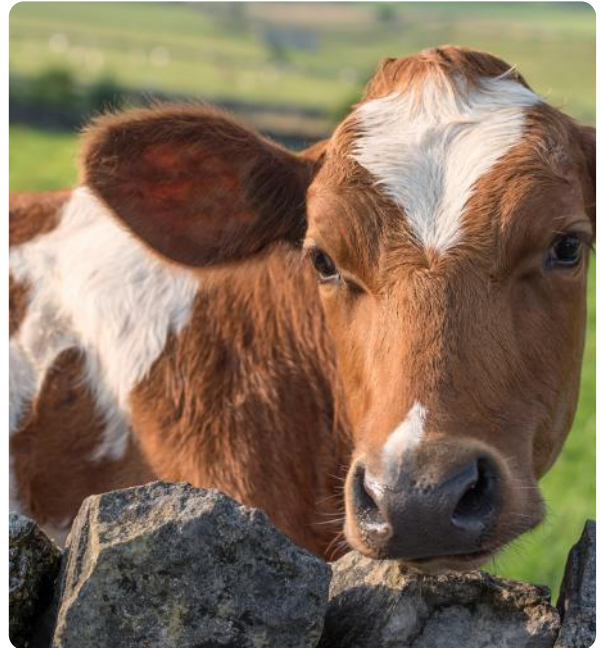


Over the past 30 years, Ripple Effect has helped to transform the lives of farmers and their families in Africa with their focus on partnership, innovation, and enablement. As a global charity, Ripple Effect recognise the need for modern IT to help support them in accomplishing their mission and bringing together their global operations.

As a result, they wanted to find an IT partner that would work closely alongside their internal IT team and help develop a forward-thinking IT strategy that would enable the best use of technology.

“What attracted to us to partnering with Chorus, was that they brought a really proactive approach and had a real focus on mutual partnership which was important to us. Previous IT partners had simply concentrated on day-to-day management, whereas we wanted to work with someone that brought forward new ideas and would help us transform our use of technology..”

Phil Brownbill, Head of IT at Ripple Effect



Developing a cloud-first approach

The first stage in this journey was to complete a cloud readiness assessment, which involved using Azure Migrate to assess the best options for migrating Ripple Effect's infrastructure into Microsoft Azure. This enabled different migration approaches to be reviewed and also costs to be clearly predicted.

“With any cloud migration project, the aim is to optimise as you migrate, rather than taking a ‘lift and shift’ approach. Wherever possible, we recommend SaaS solutions to replace on-premises technologies, such as migrating file servers into SharePoint or moving to cloud-based applications, such as Azure Active Directory”

Ben Davies, Account Manager at Chorus

With security and device management identified as a key priority, one of the first projects was to run a Proof of Concept (POC) to show how a modernised cloud-based device build and management approach could work. This involved using Enterprise Mobility and Security (EMS), which Ripple Effect could attain free licences for, and implementing technologies such as MFA, Conditional Access, Self-Service Password Reset (SSPR), Azure AD, and Intune.

“As Ripple Effect have an internal technical team, we ran the POC so that we could ensure all best practices were enabled and then handover the process to them. By converting group policies to Intune policies, setting up Conditional Access policies and implementing Intune Mobile Device Management (MDM), the team had everything they needed in place to then be able to manage this process internally.”

Joe Cato, Technical Solutions Consultant at Chorus

“We regularly need to setup and send mobile devices to our teams in Africa, so having the ability to setup a device quickly and securely, with all the right applications and policies in place, has saved our team valuable time. Once sent, we can also manage the devices centrally; we can also wipe applications and data from here in the UK if needed, so we have far greater visibility and control than before.”

Phil Brownbill, Head of IT at Ripple Effect

Remote access with Azure Virtual Desktop



Following the success of this project, the next stage of the cloud migration roadmap involved migrating the remaining on-premises infrastructure into Azure. Chorus set up the supporting infrastructure in Azure, whilst also building new domain controllers and SQL servers, before migrating legacy servers to Azure.

As well as this, Chorus set up Azure Virtual Desktop to replace an ageing Remote Desktop Services (RDS) deployment, which was used to provide staff with access to their finance application.



Through WVD, Ripple Effect staff can now access the finance application from any device and location with the same user experience as on their workstation. This is thanks to optimisations with OneDrive, Office and Teams, whilst there is also the added benefit of enhanced security via Conditional Access and MFA.



Optimising costs in Azure

As a charity, Ripple Effect benefit from heavily discounted Microsoft licensing, which includes free Azure credits. By decommissioning many of their on-premises servers and migrating to Microsoft Azure, Ripple Effect were able to use their Azure credits to reduce their infrastructure costs, whilst also enjoying the benefits of modern cloud services.

“Azure pricing can be complex and cloud costs can be difficult to manage.”

Joe Cato, Technical Solutions Consultant at Chorus



“We wanted to make the use of Azure simple and cost effective for Ripple Effect, so we created a simple cost breakdown and highlighted the best ways to reduce costs through Reserved Instances. As well as this, we were able to make best use of Azure’s capabilities and benefits by setting up scheduled automations that would turn the servers in Azure on and off. Because the servers only run when needed, Ripple Effect only pay for what they use.”

Joe Cato, Technical Solutions Consultant at Chorus



“As a charity, cost is obviously an important factor, so having a partner that continually shares ways for us to reduce and optimise our costs is really refreshing. We now have an innovative IT strategy that continually evolves, as well as the support from Chorus to call upon whenever we need. This means our staff can work securely and efficiently from any location and use technology to its full potential to support our mission.”

Phil Brownbill, Head of IT at Ripple Effect



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Ripple Effect, Head of IT

Talk to us

Sales & General
hello@chorus.co.uk

Accounts
accounts@chorus.co.uk

IT Support
support@chorus.co.uk

Telephone
01275 398 900