

Client Case Study

▶ English Welsh & Scottish Railways



Client Overview

English Welsh & Scottish Railways (EWS) has long been established as one of the leading players in the UK rail freight industry. The Company's core market is based around the bulk movement of commodities such as coal, steel, aggregates and petrochemicals.

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Matt Crayton, IT Infrastructure Manager, EWS



▶ Key Business Benefits

- ▶ Outsourced security, round-the-clock monitoring
- ▶ Improved application performance
- ▶ Reduced administration workload
- ▶ Decreased system downtimes
- ▶ Increased longevity of PC stock
- ▶ Effective one-stop integration of legacy systems
- ▶ Access to SLA reporting and fault resolution

▶ Vistorm Services

- ▶ Requirements analysis
- ▶ Managed Firewall service
- ▶ Managed personal Firewall
- ▶ Managed ACE service
- ▶ Managed IDS
- ▶ **myVistorm**

▶ Technology Deployed

- ▶ Two Nokia/Check Point Firewalls
- ▶ Intrusion Detection software
- ▶ Citrix

EWS also provides infrastructure engineering trains for Network Rail and its maintenance contractors and runs over 1,000 special passenger trains each year. EWS has increased traffic volumes, won new customers, such as high street retailers, to rail and invested over £750m in new equipment and technology. With over 650 locomotives, and 17,000 wagons, EWS helps to keep British industry moving, as well as moving products through the Channel Tunnel into mainland Europe.

EWS operates over 100 sites across the country and employs over 6200 staff. With over 4000 user accounts and some 2500 PCs, it has a large IT network. Part of a 60-strong IT team, Matt Crayton, IT Infrastructure Manager, is responsible for IT strategy, as well as the overall up-keep of the company's network.

Tightening up security

Before arriving at EWS in 2002, Crayton had already used Vistorm on various projects in his other senior IT roles. His first priority with EWS, he recalls, was to call in Vistorm to 'beef up' the security environment in which the company was operating.

'My initial task was to get some solid security in place to make the EWS network much safer for both the company and our customers,' he says. 'My previous experience with Vistorm was excellent and their proven track record – with me and the industry as a whole – made them a natural choice to audit our security needs and come up with a feasible strategy to lock our network down.'

'Having worked with Vistorm before, I knew that I was going to get the best technical expertise available,' says Crayton. 'With security there's no point in settling for second best: the risks are too great. And the in-depth knowledge that Vistorm brings to security issues is second to none. The people at Vistorm are the best in their field and they approach every project with a level of professionalism and dedication that is extremely reassuring. After a detailed consultation process, we decided on a plan and set about implementing a security system.'

Managing security 24x7

'As part of its plan, Vistorm installed and now manages two firewalls for us. We also have Intrusion Detection Software (IDS) and a managed authentication security service, using RSA ACE technology. All this means that we can now deliver a VPN to all of our users, giving them access to the information they need, when and where they need it. And I know that the security of the company's network is being constantly monitored, giving us as an organisation real peace of mind.'

With the firewall monitoring and managing the flow of traffic to and from the EWS network at its perimeter, IDS then allows Web services to enter the network safely. The solution allows administrators to detect and dispose of any threats or anomalies allowed into the network quickly and safely. And remote users can talk to the organisation using the VPN, a highly secure connection to the EWS network using public access such as the Internet.

Making Citrix work for EWS

Having successfully implemented this first major project at EWS, Crayton then asked Vistorm to turn its attention to another important area of the business. He felt EWS could benefit from a server-based computing (SBC) solution such as Citrix. Considering the number of sites in the network and the large number of users, a centrally managed

application delivery method seemed an ideal way of reducing costs and speeding up the deployment of key services to EWS staff.

A Citrix SBC solution allows administrators to deliver applications to their users, wherever they are, from a central Metaframe presentation server. Designed to enhance Windows 2000 servers, the Citrix server allows fast, scalable, easy-to-manage application delivery from a central location.

'We were faced with a simple financial reality,' says Crayton. 'We needed to make our IT operation more effective, while still giving our users instant access to the applications they needed – and without spending a huge amount of money. So we needed to squeeze every penny out of our IT budgets. It seemed obvious to us that SBC was the best way of doing this. We have to upgrade applications and roll them out quickly and efficiently to our users. SBC allows us to do this without having to replace the devices on which they run. '

'Prolonging the life of our PC stock was a major concern for us and Citrix seemed like a perfect solution. SBC also offers huge advantages in reducing network downtimes and making user administration central, quick and time-efficient.'

Benefiting from the experts

'If it had been a simple implementation of Citrix – with just Windows and MS Office on desktops – we would have put in the solution ourselves. But I knew full well that there were some ancient legacy systems that would need really expert attention to get them to work smoothly in an SBC environment,' says Crayton.

'That's why I called in Vistorm. They are, in my opinion, real technical experts and I knew that I could rely on them to assess these 30-year-old systems objectively and integrate them in such a way that they ran without a hitch alongside our other applications.

'Needless to say that's exactly what the guys at Vistorm did. They succeeded where others had failed.'

Improving response times

Not only did the new SBC infrastructure enable Crayton and his team to administer their customers' accounts more efficiently, it also meant that the response times of the applications they were delivering were improved too.

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Adding value to the deal

As part of their managed services, the EWS team have access to myVistorm. This secure online portal allows managed services customers access to a suite of reports, allowing them to analyse the performance of their services. myVistorm also gives EWS access to a real-time online Help Desk, SLA performance reporting and a knowledge centre, packed with up-to-date patches, troubleshooting information and manufacturer-approved system updates.

'myVistorm is a very useful tool, empowering us to monitor our services and look at and review our security policy whenever we want to,' says Crayton. 'And it allows us to take on certain aspects of fault resolution ourselves. All in all, it's a great additional service.'

Proving the track record

Vistorm has a proven track record in both the security and server-based computing fields. Matt Crayton and EWS are warmly appreciative of both, and of Vistorm's exceptional ability to combine technical sophistication with a highly developed business sense.

'You don't often get the right blend of commercial awareness and technical expertise in an organisation like Vistorm,' continues Crayton. 'But the guys at Vistorm seem to have got it just right. Their technical know-how is almost unsurpassed, in my opinion. But everyone in the company has a forward-thinking business brain too, which makes dealing with them a real pleasure. You can talk to them about your business aims and they can understand what you are driving at immediately. And they're just really nice people to work with.'

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