

Case
study

led

LED shapes up with managed Azure migration with Claranet

About LED

Established in 2006, LED (LED Leisure Management Ltd) is a charitable not-for-profit organisation which aims to bring a range of cultural, sporting, and physical activities to people living in South West England.

The charity currently employs over 400 staff across 19 leisure centres in the region. LED works hard to improve access to its facilities by maintaining active communications via its website and social media channels, and by keeping its programmes fun and interactive.

The challenge

With a deep commitment to the communities it serves, LED is passionate about continuously improving the services it offers, and empowering its team to meet the needs of its customers and the wider organisation. The technology that sits behind its leisure centres – from its website for online bookings to its database and payment processing application – is critical to achieving these aims. Reliability and availability of these applications are therefore essential.

“Moving to the cloud offered the opportunity to right-size our infrastructure.”

In addition, as a charity, cost is another key consideration, so the organisation makes every effort to ensure that it is operating as efficiently as possible.

LED had been hosting its applications and servers in a traditional on-premise environment, through which the leisure centres accessed a centralised Remote Desktop Server (RDS) farm, which ran its booking and payment applications. While this setup had served the organisation well in the past, the operating system was nearing end of life and with its support contract coming to an end. Within this context LED saw the opportunity to migrate its applications to the cloud to future-proof its operations and achieve greater cost efficiencies.

“The fact that they only pay for the infrastructure they use will have a huge financial impact.”

Kate Hoskins, Head of Finance and Support Services at LED, explained: “As an organisation we’ve been steadily transforming our services and the technologies that support us to better serve our customers and employees, and help to move the business forward. A lack of flexibility in our previous on-premise arrangement slowed the pace of this transformation and meant that we were paying for capacity that wasn’t used a lot of the time.

...

LED shapes up with managed Azure migration with Claranet

“Moving to the cloud offered the opportunity to right-size our infrastructure so that we would only pay for what we use, which would go a long way towards preparing us for the long-term future. However, we needed a partner with the right skills and expertise to help us make the move.”

With concerns around the resiliency of their hosting environment, and with future expansion in mind, LED sought to partner with an organisation that could offer peace of mind, an innovative roadmap for the future, and the skills to complement their in-house teams.

The solution

LED turned to Claranet to design, implement, and manage a new high-performance application hosting environment in Azure from the ground up, to create a rock-solid foundation for future projects and expansion.

Claranet set about building the environment in Azure, spinning VMs for its databases and web applications and migrating them across. The team moved LED's RDS farm over to Windows Server 2016, addressing the end of life issue and delivering new functionality.

To keep its employees connected securely to critical line-of-business data and applications, Claranet built in a secure connection to Azure – Azure ExpressRoute – ensuring that LED's traffic never leaves its private network when accessing its applications. This effectively makes the Azure platform an extension of LED's corporate environment and helps to safeguard availability, reliability, and security.

The solution takes full advantage of Azure's scalability and scales up and down in line with demand. This ensures that its applications can easily handle sudden increases in web traffic without impacting the user experience, and that LED only pays for what it uses.

“We'd struggle to operate without the services that Claranet provides.”

As a fully managed service, Claranet provides complete support behind the scenes, ensuring and protecting application availability and offering advice on how to optimise the infrastructure to deliver performance improvements and cost savings.

The result

In a big departure from its previous on-premise environment – which it had to run 24/7 – LED now has the flexibility to turn things off when they aren't being used. The fact that they only pay for the infrastructure they use will have a huge financial impact in the long run.

Kate explained: “The scalability and flexibility of our new infrastructure have brought huge benefits. We get a big rush to book tennis courts at just gone midnight each day because they tend to fill up fast, so we need capacity at that point but not for the rest of the night. It just doesn't make sense for us to keep all of our servers running all the time. Even something as small as this has made a big difference to our bottom line.”

This migration is the latest in a series of projects that Claranet has carried out in partnership with LED over the last two decades. These have provided a range of different services, including its MPLS network, and Claranet is also currently in the process of deploying its Hosted Voice service. This, according to Kate, has made Claranet a strategically important and trusted partner for the organisation.

She continued: “We'd struggle to operate without the services that Claranet provides. If the network goes down, for example, we'd be unable to take payments or make bookings so they're effectively the lifeline for our customer experience and revenues. But they've fully earned our trust in them, and have enabled us to drive the business forward, safe in the knowledge we're in good hands.”

For more information about Claranet's services, and the benefits these deliver, go to: www.claranet.co.uk