

The Whittington Hospital NHS Trust



The Whittington Hospital NHS Trust is an acute general teaching hospital situated in Archway, in the north of Islington. As well as providing clinical placements for undergraduates, The Whittington also has a large post-graduate training centre and provides training for a wide range of other health professionals including nurses, midwives, radiographers and dieticians. With 467 beds and employing over 2,000 staff, The Whittington primarily serves the communities of north Islington and west Haringey, (a population of approximately 250,000 people) and treats a significant number of patients from Camden, Barnet and Hackney.

As is the case with all NHS Trusts, The Whittington is increasingly dependent on the continued operation of IT services and relies heavily upon its server infrastructure 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Historically, The Whittington operated a Data Centre based around a traditional physical architecture with the majority of its servers powered by Microsoft Windows.

Investing for the future

Following an intensive period of analysis, The Whittington decided to establish a virtual infrastructure, initially to accommodate the Trust's existing virtual machines and to provide the necessary capacity to convert several physical servers. "We envisaged that the base installation would be expanded at a later date to support the virtualisation of the expanded server estate," explained Steve Illingworth, the Assistant Director of Information and Management Technology at The Whittington.

The Whittington invited several ICT suppliers to submit proposals, including BDS Solutions which had already worked with The Whittington in implementing an encryption solution based around McAfee's SafeBoot - a leading enterprise-class security software solution for data encryption and user authentication. "We had been impressed with the levels of professionalism that BDS had shown during that project, and we were impressed by the thoroughness of their new proposal," said Steve.

Core business objectives

The Whittington had identified a number of core business objectives to be delivered through virtualisation, including reduced operational costs, increased agility during server provisioning and the simplified backup of each server's complete workload with point-in-time restore via a single operation.



“Our major objective was to completely rationalise our server estate, improve response times and deliver a far more efficient, flexible and cost-effective service,” continued Steve. “Virtualisation would allow us to reduce the number of physical servers improving the efficiency, availability, flexibility, and manageability of our server infrastructure.”

“Virtualisation breaks the 1:1 relationship between the operating system, application and physical server, explained Paul Marrow, Sales Engagement Manager at BDS Solutions. “Virtualisation allows the partitioning of a single physical server into multiple virtual servers capable of running its own full-fledged operating system as well as providing additional capacity as future demand for new and expanded services increases.”

On-time, to budget and with no disruption

The first phase of the virtualisation project at The Whittington has now been completed. “BDS had virtualised some 30 servers - about a third of our infrastructure - onto Dell PowerEdge Servers running VMware ESX software, giving us a substantial increase in capacity and capabilities and an high level of resilience,” continued Steve.

The Whittington’s investment in a virtual infrastructure also supports the Carbon Reduction Strategy for the NHS in England. Underutilised server hardware can account for a significant percentage of a Data Centre’s total power consumption - an inefficiency that is both wasteful and expensive.

“Throughout the project, BDS has been extremely professional,” concluded Steve. “They have delivered on-time, to budget and to specification with no disruption to our day-to-day operations. The confidence that we had in them has been completely justified.”

Benefits:

- Improved efficiency, availability, flexibility and manageability of server infrastructure
- Increased agility during server provisioning - reduced effort, cost and time scales
- Reduced operational cost including decrease in physical servers, rack space and associated energy and cooling requirements
- Containment of future server sprawl, allowing the addition of new servers without a parallel increase in server hardware.
- Simplified backup of complete server workload (operating system, application and data) and point-in-time restore via a single operation
- Confidence in a technology partner proven to deliver on-time, to budget and to specification

For more information on BDS Solutions and the range of solutions developed for NHS Trusts throughout the UK, go to: www.bds-solutions.co.uk or email us at: sales@bds-solutions.co.uk