

SharePoint Case Study



Migration to SharePoint 2010 provides Trust with robust and scalable information platform

Central Manchester Foundation Trust comprises of 5 hospitals providing services to over half-a-million patients annually. To support the delivery of first-class services to this population, the Trust relies on the latest Microsoft computing and network technologies including SharePoint Office Server.

Existing Installation

The Trust's single-server SharePoint 2003 platform had been established primarily as research and development environment however, many sites had begun to form part of more structured business processes. With further enhancements required and a strategy to enable departments to utilise SharePoint for document publication, it was decided to pursue an upgrade to SharePoint Server 2010 and migrate to a new virtualised infrastructure to host the services.

Solution Design

Having provided support and consultancy to the Trust relating for other Microsoft infrastructure technologies for nearly 10 years, BDS Solutions were approached to undertake the upgrade. The initial part of the exercise involved consideration to calculating the potential growth of the resultant SharePoint farm. BDS used metrics established from experience of working with other Trusts to determine database sizing and growth regimes for the new SQL Server 2008 R2 installation that would host the new farm. The database topology was based on separating corporate and departmental content storage to cater for the potentially differing growth patterns.

The new farm design took advantage of separating SharePoint application and front-end servers to maximise flexibility and to allow for growth as more departments moved content to SharePoint. Access to this storage was also separated with different web applications giving access to corporate and department site collections allowing. As well as ensuring network traffic could be effectively balanced, this permitted separate security models to be established. This ensured adequate control over content could be exercised without introducing unnecessary complex administrative procedures. The farm design was presented back to the Trust with pertinent information relating to each design element.

For more information please contact BDS Solutions on **01884 33440** or visit **bds-solutions.co.uk**

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This allowed the Trust to visualize the final farm configuration and to ensure suitable resources were allocated within the virtual environment. Once agreed, a plan was prepared by BDS showing the procedure that would be followed to implement the design.

Implementation

Once the design and plan was agreed, BDS Solutions engineers installed and configured the Windows 2008 servers within the existing VMware ESX infrastructure and the SQL Server 2008 R2 instance was established. Without a direct upgrade path from SharePoint 2003 to 2010 available, BDS initially implemented and configured SharePoint 2007 in the new environment to act as an interim SharePoint platform. Following a full back-up of the existing farm and subsequent validation, a full audit of all operating components and features was undertaken. This would become the verification list for the completed migration.

The SharePoint 2003 farm, was migrated to 2007 and all components and features were checked for operation and any technical issues resolved. After a period of validation, the 2007 farm was backed-up and restored to a separate test environment where the 2010 upgrade procedures could be verified before being applied to the live site. Any bespoke procedures were tested in this environment and the migration process fully documented. This preparation permitted the live migration from the interim 2007 platform to 2010 to be undertaken quickly with minimal disruption to the users of the live farm.

Documentation

After establishing the SharePoint Server 2010 farm, BDS provided the Trust with configuration documentation and procedures for provisioning new sites. Included in this documentation are plans describing methodology for scaling-up the SharePoint farm as content and usage increases.

Conclusion

The Trust, having committed to SharePoint as a central part of their information strategy, needed assurance that the platform on which this would evolve would support them well into the future. The existing farm had evolved into production usage and the content needed to be preserved. It was therefore imperative that a migration was required into the new 2010 platform. The establishment of this project ensured that the new SharePoint 2010 platform would meet current and future needs and that existing content was reliably migrated.

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