

Virtual solution delivers real benefits for ESPC

ESPC (Edinburgh Solicitors Property Centre) was incorporated in 1971 and since that time has grown to become the leading force in residential property throughout east central Scotland.

By coming together under one banner, solicitors throughout Edinburgh and the Lothians were able to provide homebuyers and sellers with a convenient, cost-effective and hassle-free means to buy and sell property. In 1998 ESPC expanded further by launching Solicitors Property Shop in Yorkshire and in 2000 launched ESPC Mortgages, a financial planning service for homebuyers.

With a significant online presence that handles over 265,000 unique visitors, more than 12.6 million page views and 1.2 million property downloads every month, it is essential that ESPC's systems run 24 hours a day. The company has a dedicated team that develops many of its own applications and needed a solution that would reduce the hardware costs, providing a better return on investment, as well as providing a robust business continuity solution.

Castle implemented VMware software that enables ESPC to reduce from 49 to 14 servers and conduct planned maintenance tasks on their systems during normal office hours, without any disruption to their business; and should the worst happen, ESPC's systems will be back up and running automatically, almost as if nothing ever happened. In addition, it significantly reduced the need to provide the development team with more hardware.

ESPC also projects power savings of around £35,000 per year with an annual carbon emission reduction equivalent to taking 35 cars off the road each year.

Mike Ryan, IT Manager at ESPC, said:

"We have worked with Castle for some time and they are at the forefront of VMware provision in Scotland. Castle demonstrated the end to end virtualisation skills that we needed in terms of capacity planning, design and build, project management, replication and support.

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Case Study Server Virtualisation

ESPC

Reduction from 49 to 14 servers

Projected power savings of around £35,000 per year

"Castle demonstrated the end-to-end virtualisation skills that we needed"

"71% consolidation of our server technology"

"The VMware and IBM solution allows us to make savings without any compromise of our IT infrastructure as well as achieving 71% consolidation of our server technology. It allows our developers to work on virtual servers that can be set up in only a few minutes, a process that used to take half a day and would require investment in additional server hardware and time to set them-up.

"We now have really effective operational flexibility without having to juggle servers, especially in our developers' department."

George Strathie, Software & Services Director, Castle Computer Services added:

"We are delighted to have implemented one of the largest commercial VMware projects in Scotland with ESPC. From experience most non-virtualised servers run at an average peak capacity of only 7% or less, but virtualisation improves efficiency by allowing many virtual servers to run on each physical server. The return on investment in VMware is almost immediate for most medium to large sized organisations that employ multiple servers. Many can see a 30% - 70% saving on total cost of ownership."