

Deploying a new IT infrastructure for Colt Data Centre Services

SUMMARY

Colt Data Centre Services' existing IT infrastructure was coming to the end of its life in March 2016. The challenge was to design and deliver a bespoke, secure and responsive infrastructure with only seven days left before it was due to go live.

BENEFITS

- ◆ Non-Microsoft workloads successfully migrated onto Azure
- ◆ Resource-led cloud hosting
- ◆ Speed and agility to get to market
- ◆ Mixture of IaaS and PaaS services
- ◆ Industry-leading security and data protection

SYSTEMSUP
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- Gold Cloud Platform
- Gold Devices and Deployment
- Gold Identity and Access
- Gold Hosting
- Gold Datacenter
- Silver Cloud Productivity
- Silver Intelligent Systems
- Silver Application Development
- Silver Messaging

The Challenge

Colt Data Centre Services (Colt DCS) provides world-class network and communications services to information-intensive businesses across Europe, Asia and North America. For the past 12 years, its IT systems had grown and sprawled. As a result of the rapid expansion of its own business, Colt DCS needed a new, more secure IT infrastructure to support its growing customer base and make it more agile, more responsive and better able to innovate.

The key challenges facing its IT department were:

- Finding the best route to the cloud
- Choosing the right cloud services
- Supporting all types of workloads
- Ensuring security was built in

The trouble was there were only seven days in which to create an entirely new infrastructure.

■ The Approach

Colt DCS's Operation Systems Manager, Romain Tranchant, oversaw the move to the cloud. He had already set out his roadmap for the future which focused on a move to Microsoft Azure using the Data Centre Infrastructure Management (DCIM) approach. He had completed the DevOps side of the work but now wanted a small team to design and build a new cloud-based infrastructure that would be built to last. As he reflects, "What I needed was to go from no IT structure at all to everything being there and the way to do that was to get the right people in the room together."

Time was of the essence, with only seven days available to design and build the new Azure environment. Instead of deploying an internal team, Romain approached several IT solutions providers and chose Insight, a global provider of intelligent technology solutions, who in turn brought SystemsUp on board.

"I chose to procure through Insight because I had previous experience of working with them and knew they would absolutely get the context of what I was trying to do," explains Romain. "I trusted them to bring in the right partner to do the best job."

Nick Goodwin, Software Solutions Specialist for Insight, says, "When Romain got in touch we understood his urgency. We have a number of partners we can call on but for this project, there was no doubt that SystemsUp was our first choice. They are experts in Azure and they get on very well with our customers."

The small team brought together by Insight and SystemsUp undertook an in-depth workshop with Colt DCS to understand what their desired solution and business outcomes were. Using a range of Azure IaaS and PaaS services, the team were able to spin up the supporting elements for Colt DCS to be able to deploy their applications in a short space of time. Insight co-ordinated the project using the Agile scrum method. They established daily communications between the SystemsUp consultants and the engineering team at Colt DCS to ensure everything was kept on track. This allowed key workflows and systems to be built quickly. In fact, by the end of Day One all the virtual machines had been built and by the afternoon of Day Two, the network was in place.

Romain Tranchant says, "After two days we could have had nothing. I knew it was a risk but decided we could take it because I felt surrounded by the right people. I kept asking

myself. Do I need a network specialist, a storage specialist and a security specialist? The answer was to have a lean team of people in that room who each had all of those skills. You could say this was the most expensive way of doing it but for me, using less qualified people would have led to a solution that potentially wouldn't work and would have cost more in the long term."

■ The Solution

What was critical for Colt DCS was to build an Azure environment that would be strong enough and flexible enough to build on top of in the future. It was also critical, because of the number of legacy applications being migrated, that non-Microsoft workloads would function just as well in their new surroundings.

The new solution also had to be highly secure. "I couldn't take a chance around security," says Romain, "not with the type of data we were putting online. No-one has access without full authentication and there are two different login systems."

A comprehensive data retention policy was created in a short space of time and testing of the platform was completed.

■ The Benefits

Colt DCS have a brand new, cloud optimised infrastructure based on a mix of Azure IaaS and PaaS that works well and will be able to grow with each new project that comes along. Secure processes and procedures are in place that follow Microsoft's best practices for Azure.

Romain concludes that, "Using SystemsUp and Insight has given us huge value. We continue to have a very positive engagement and I know I will be calling on them again. Ultimately the beauty for me is that the Azure infrastructure they helped us create is so simple, which frees us up to get on with the important task of giving our customers a better experience."

■ Colt Data Centre Services

As a leading colocation provider, Colt Data Centre Services operates 29 data centres across Europe and Asia. In Europe Colt DCS serves 11 major countries covering 56,000 sqm² of operational space connected by its extensive pan-European network. Colt DCS provides the facilities to house your IT hardware, allowing you to focus on looking after your core business. For more information, please visit www.coltdatacentres.net