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network news

the newsletter of SICL summer 2008

sicl 
The network is everything

The Green Crunch

Virtualisation & Acceleration - More with Less



The Event '08 & Britcar
The Continuum



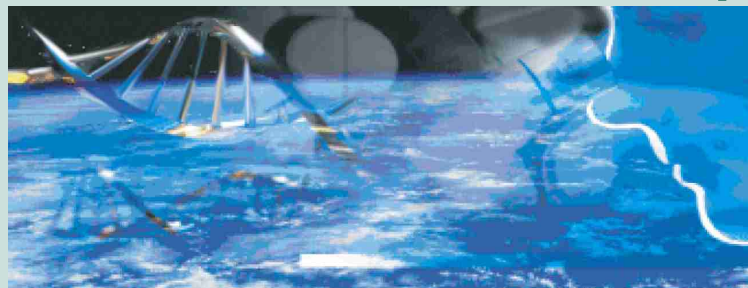
Welcome...

According to the media we face imminent doom! The credit crunch will plunge us into recession and the planet can't continue to sustain our activities. Serious messages indeed, but faced with this we can do either of two things; ignore it and hope it goes away or do something about it. If we choose to act then technology can definitely help. In this edition we showcase several technologies that can reduce costs and carbon footprint for businesses – sensible IT strategy that many companies are adopting or fulfilling.

As this issue goes to print SICL Ltd has closed its best ever trading year, which is due to our vendors, our staff but most of all our clients – many thanks for your continuing custom!

Cliff Fox
Managing Director
July 2008

Instem Case Study



Instem is a global organisation, providing world-class information solutions for drug and chemical development. Established in 1969, Instem's continued success is based on technological expertise, a thorough understanding of their market's business and regulatory requirements combined with their long-term commitment to the success of their customers. Their customer base is drawn from the world's leading pharmaceutical, chemical and contract research organisations and their solutions are used by over 50 of the world's leading global research & development organizations at more than 80 sites worldwide.

BACKGROUND

Following a successful WAN upgrade and acceleration work by SICL Instem decided to review their overall infrastructure seeking efficiencies in performance, resilience, scalability, security, predictability and productivity. Instem also sought to reduce infrastructure resources where practicable so as to reduce operational costs and contribute to lowering carbon footprint.

APPROACH

To meet the requirements SICL designed and implemented an integrated solution bringing together best-of breed technologies and services from world leading manufacturers. Prior to receiving the contract SICL worked closely with Instem's in-house team to set up and run a full proof-of-concept and user acceptance testing project, successfully demonstrating the effectiveness and performance enhancements of the integrated technology operating under conditions typical of the Instem daily working environment. Based on a highly resilient Cisco WAN infrastructure the architecture included Riverbed Steelhead acceleration technology to facilitate high speed file transfer requirements and remove the need for local file storage; a centralised VMWare server farm to reduce hardware real estate; a Hitachi SAN system to provide scalable file storage and CommVault for secure backup and data retrieval.

riverbed

CISCO

vmware

commvault
solving forward

HITACHI
 Inspire the Next

RESULTS

The final approved system was installed and configured within budget and agreed timescales producing immediate operational productivity benefits for Instem. For example, a daily task for the development team involves setting up a test environment, which under the old system took 8 hours to complete. Post-project the same task takes approximately 10 minutes from start to finish, thanks to "snap-shotting" functionality.

In addition to providing Instem with a modern, high speed, WAN based on the latest technology the SICL solution has provided a range of direct benefits both for the company and ultimately the wider environment. Through the reduction in server hardware, power consumption and air conditioning requirements the company has been able to improve its carbon footprint and remove risks associated with operating local file storage.

Aedas Case Study



Aedas is the world's fourth largest Architectural practice enjoying substantial growth. The company has expanded in recent years from 4 offices with 180 staff to 32 offices with 2,100 staff worldwide. The customer base is drawn from a wide arena including City Academic Colleges, Shopping Centres and Supermarkets including ASDA and Morrisons, Hospitals, Airports and other prestigious projects in the Middle East. The company has concentrated on gaining an international presence and has offices in the UK, wider Europe, Australia and the United States.

BACKGROUND

Aedas has enjoyed substantial growth both in terms of staff numbers and locations. The data stored was proving difficult to manage centrally with disparate systems and multiple servers across the organisation. In addition, individual locations were running out of disk space whilst others had spare capacity. The company also had no resilient business continuity or disaster recovery procedures and acknowledged that the loss of even one office could be a 'business ending' event. The company also recognised that simply increasing network bandwidth to address the issues was both cost prohibitive and restrictive.

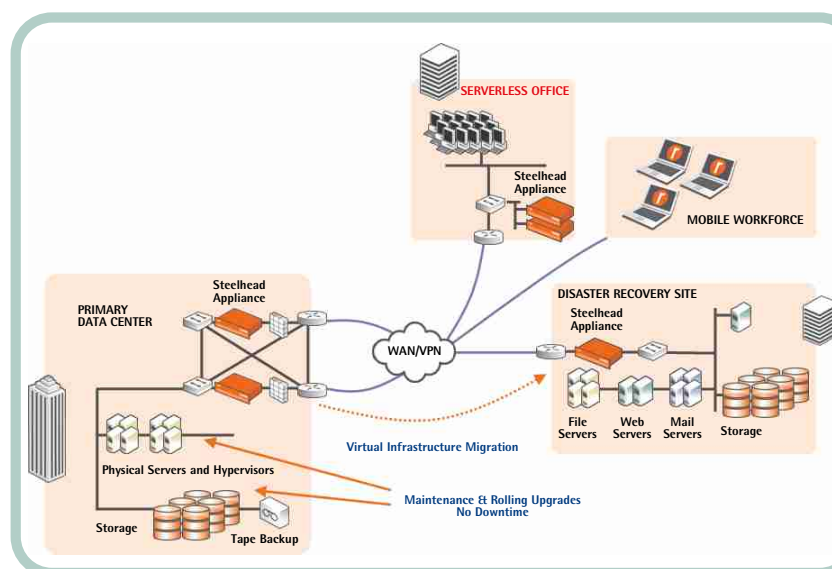
APPROACH

SICL recommended a Riverbed Steelhead solution across the individual sites to provide LAN speed performance across the WAN. As a proof of concept exercise the Riverbed appliances were installed at just two sites. During this time, data from one site was completely removed locally and stored at the other site and, without announcement, the users at both sites ran unknowingly for two weeks from the single site without any impact on performance. This gave Aedas confidence in the solution to install the Riverbed units across the organisation.

RESULTS

The Riverbed Steelhead units were installed by SICL at 16 sites across the European division and the company was immediately able to implement their resilient programme for Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity. In addition, the company was able to realise immediate cost savings by reducing the bandwidth required and a planned server refresh was deemed unnecessary. The project as a whole had an impressive ROI of just 18 months with the added benefit of reducing work load at both local and central levels. In addition Aedas was able to considerably reduce its carbon footprint.

VMWare & Riverbed – more with less!



The demands on information technology are changing. More employees than ever work outside their headquarters, whilst businesses are striving to consolidate and simplify their IT infrastructure. Organisations are increasingly looking to consolidate their file/application server infrastructure from remote offices to reduce costs, simplify management and meet compliance demands. In addition, they are looking to increase server utilisation and lower their total cost of ownership. The added benefit, or in some cases the primary benefit, being a reduced carbon footprint through reduced power consumption, reduced cooling and reduced raw materials.

Riverbed enables consolidation of IT from branch offices to central sites or Data Centres without affecting the end user experience; VMware enables server consolidation at a central site or Data Centres. Combined, VMware and Riverbed offer an unbeatable solution to all organisations interested in Return on Investment, reduced power utilities, reduced management and much more.

The Event 2008

SICL was pleased to host 'The Event '08' on Thursday 12th June 2008 at Elvington Circuit, York. The theme was 'SICL 5th Gear - 5 Events in 1 day'. In addition to the popular 'Fast Laps' competition and 'Hot Rides' feature, other activities included 'Reverse Steer Snooker', and 'Helicopter Treasure Hunt', which saw two helicopters stationed at The Event and used to conduct a treasure hunt over York.

Activities also included a 'Professional Scalextric' competition and large screen PS3 kiosk running motorsport games. Prizes were awarded for all featured events plus a Quiz Card feature to win a large screen TV. Guests were given tuition and instruction by professional motorsports drivers including Martyn Bell of BMW Racing Team, Andy Curtis of Aston Martin, Phillip Gleu winner of the Time Attack Championship, and Guy Smith Le Mans Winner, amongst others. Prize giving and commentary was by Channel Five's Fifth Gear presenter Vicki Butler-Henderson.

Congratulations to the winners:
Fast Laps - **Martin Firth of Tricon**
Helicopter Treasure Hunt - **Neale Jacobs of YAA.**

Reverse Steer Snooker - **Chris Groom of Monaghan Group**
Scalextric - **James Lockwood of Yorkshire Water**

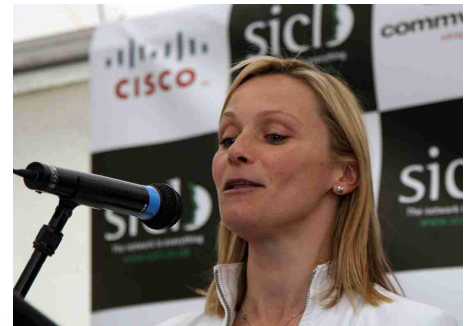
Congratulations also to the Quiz-Card winner - **Jennifer Davies of Mazars LLP**

Thank you to our sponsors and partners: **Cisco, Commvault, HDS, HP ProCurve, Mitel, Riverbed, Star** and **VMWare.**

Thank you also to **Javelin Trackdays, H2A Design** and **Vicki Butler-Henderson** who helped SICL organise the event.

A special thank you must go to Yorkshire Air Ambulance who stationed one of the helicopters at the event. Please support this fantastic charity www.yorkshireairambulance.org.uk
Attendance as always was superb and the weather was not unkind to us. See you again in 2009.

Cliff Fox, Managing Director, SICL.



BritCar 2008

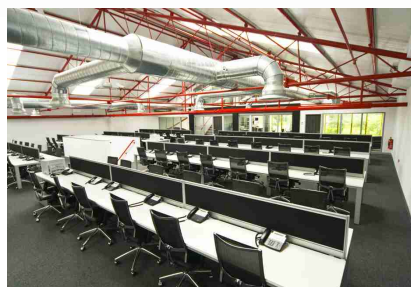
SICL has sponsored the Clio Cup car driven by Ashley Woodman and Owen Thomas in this years Britcar Series. Although comparative race novices, Ash and Owen are third in class and fourth overall at the half way point of the season.



The next races are 17th August Snetterton, 21st September Silverstone 24 hour and 1st November Brands Hatch, all welcome.

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