

CASE STUDY

Cofathec Heatsave is a leading provider of integrated energy and facilities solutions in the UK

Background

Access to data is vital for any company, whether it is Exchange, SQL or just file data, without it most companies are unable to operate efficiently – this can lead to lost revenues and infuriated customers.

Cofathec Heatsave is a leading provider of integrated energy and facilities solutions in the UK. Services include installation and maintenance of technical facilities and energy management. Cofathec Heatsave is the UK subsidiary of the pan European Cofathec Group.

Cofathec Heatsave has ten regional offices around the UK and a head office located in central London. Cofathec Heatsave has a total of 400 IT users.

Challenge

Based on a successful business relationship spanning four years, David Archer, IT director at Cofathec Heatsave, tasked Insite with providing a business continuity solution that would provide comprehensive protection against two key scenarios: an environmental failure of the computer room at the head office in London and also a single application or business critical server failure.

“Our business continuity requirements rose up the agenda at boardroom level due to several high profile and well-publicised power outages causing major problems and disruption across the UK in 2005. We also experienced an office fire which resulted in significant disruption to the business” said David Archer, IT director at Cofathec Heatsave. “Furthermore, London terrorist activity has become more than just a threat but a real danger that we need to make provision for.”

The Business Requirements

Cofathec and Insite identified a number of mandatory requirements:

- Data from mission critical applications using MS SQL 2000, MS SQL 7, MS Exchange 2003 and MS Server 2003 needed to be replicated to a location outside the M25 ring road in real-time over an Internet-based VPN or other low cost communications solution.
- Secure access to business critical applications was required from regional offices, home offices and any of Cofathec’s Internet-enabled PCs.
- The time taken to invoke the solution following a disaster should be no longer than four hours.
- Cofathec Heatsave was not to incur the upfront cost of hardware or software so the chosen solution was to be supplied as a managed service.
- A separate, isolated server was required for MS SQL 2000, MS SQL 7, MS Exchange 2003, MS Server 2003 user data and MS Active Directory.

Solution

Insite delivered a bespoke solution that met all of Cofathec’s prerequisites and, in addition, comprised three market-leading products.

Business continuity infrastructure

Insite created five servers in its VMware ESX infrastructure in its data centre in Tunbridge Wells, for the exclusive use of Cofathec Heatsave. VMware ESX is server virtualisation software that allows a single piece of AMD or Intel hardware to be partitioned into a number of isolated, virtual servers referred to as *virtual machines*. The current generation of AMD dual core processors allow up to 48 virtual machines to be supported on a single piece of physical server hardware.

Double-Take Software

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Recovery made easy.

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Insite's recommendation for using VMware virtualisation software was based on its greatest benefit – the production server infrastructure is duplicated at an alternative location for a fraction of the price of individual servers.

Real-time data replication

Insite configured Double-Take software on four pairs of servers to provide real-time data replication for mission critical applications running MS SQL 2000, MS SQL 7, MS Exchange 2003 and MS Server 2003 file & print. Eight Double-Take licences were needed for the four pairs of servers.

"We included Double-Take as part of the managed service proposition as it comprehensively addresses Cofathec's real-time data replication need. It is Microsoft Certified, best-of-breed software and as we have had excellent results in the past with it, we were completely confident of its capabilities," said James Barden, managing director at Insite.

Insite configured a Virtual Private Network (VPN) between Cofathec Heatsave's data centre in London and the Insite data centre in Tunbridge Wells to support the data replication, for which approximately 1Mb of Internet bandwidth is required.

Application development

Insite configured a load balanced server farm running Terminal Server 2003 with Cofathec Heatsave's application set. Terminal Server 2003 allows the applications to be deployed securely to any PC with an Internet connection over broadband or low bandwidth connections.

Results

Following a set up and testing period of four weeks, Cofathec Heatsave now has a reliable and robust business continuity solution that fulfils its needs in the UK. As required, the solution is available within four hours of a disaster and can run indefinitely.

The combination of three best-of-breed products ensures that the solution is feature-rich and will scale up to meet any requirements in the future.

"Double-Take Software has helped Insite break new ground in business continuity solutions using state-of-the-art technologies. We look forward to an ongoing and successful, joint campaign that raises awareness and makes the solution widely available to every enterprise-sized company in the UK," concluded Barden.

About Cofathec Heatsave

Cofathec Heatsave is the principal trading subsidiary of the Cofathec Group in the UK. The Cofathec Group is the service arm of Gaz de France, a leading international energy utility and service provider with a presence throughout the entire energy chain. Across Europe, the Cofathec Group offers an extensive range of technical services enhancing the scope of activities offered by Cofathec in the UK. As a subsidiary of Gaz de France, Cofathec can also tap into a wealth of energy management experience and expertise. With engineers and a network of offices located throughout the country, Cofathec are able to provide a local service on a national scale and with Group representation in most European countries, Cofathec can serve its customers in Europe too.

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About Insite

Insite is an IT consultancy specialising in real time disaster recovery solutions based on Double-Take, VMware ESX server and Microsoft Terminal Server 2003. We offer business continuity solutions located on customer premises or solutions hosted in our data centre in Tunbridge Wells. Formed in 1994, Insite has a strong blue chip customer base and references in every market sector. Insite is a Microsoft Certified Partner and one of four VMware Authorised Consultancy (VAC) partners in the UK.

About Double-Take Software

Headquartered in Southborough, Massachusetts, Double-Take® Software (Nasdaq: DBTK) is a leading provider of affordable software for recoverability, including continuous data replication, application availability and system state protection. Double-Take Software products and services enable customers to protect and recover business-critical data and applications such as Microsoft Exchange, SQL, and Sharepoint in both physical and virtual environments. With its unparalleled partner programs, technical support, and professional services, Double-Take Software is the solution of choice for more than ten thousand customers worldwide, from SME's to the Fortune 500. Information about Double-Take Software's products and services can be found at www.doubletake.com.

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