Performance hosting that scales: Hindin chooses Web Drive

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Hindin Solutions Ltd, a Christchurch-based IT services company, is a leading provider of service delivery solutions to organisations in the government, education and commercial sectors. Hindin are the makers of the Unison Enterprise Workflow Platform which underpins flexible Enterprise solutions for Contact Centres, Stakeholder Engagement, Contracts Management and many other real-world scenarios.

When a workflow solution used by a large government department outgrew the hardware platform on which it was hosted, Hindin looked for a partner which could meet stringent requirements for enterprise performance, reliability and scalability. It found that partner in Web Drive – and today has a solution which blows its users away with a sevenfold gain in performance.

Among the range of services provided by Hindin is the Unison workflow and case management solution, used in this case by its client, a government department. Unison product development manager Steve Simatos says user growth on the system was causing performance problems. "Initially, the software was set up for 200 people, but it had grown far past that, to 1200 users. The demand was exceeding the capability of the underlying hardware platform, necessitating a capacity increase."

In a competitive bid process, six vendors were invited to demonstrate how they could solve the technical aspects of the problem and meet the commercial criteria of the customer. "There were a number of specifications, including a demonstrable track record, best practice technical expertise, appropriate solution architecture, and cost. We also wanted a partner which had a proven ability to scale to meet the needs of high-level clients, the likes of banks and government departments."

Cutting out red tape

From the six, Web Drive emerged as most capable of meeting these requirements. More than that, Simatos says its engagement methodology offered a minimum of red tape. "The process involved in awarding the business, getting the solution set up and migrated from the previous platform to the new one was quick and seamless. Additionally, should we need to scale up, it can be done with a minimum of additional paperwork and administration; it's a real on-demand design."

In terms of performance and reliability criteria, one of the key factors which supported the choice of Web Drive was its detailing of the solution design and underlying platform. "This demonstrated that Web Drive understood the technical aspects of what Unison does for our client. This was no 'box-off-the-shelf' solution, but one designed to meet the specifics of what we wanted," Simatos explains.

Migration leaves nothing to chance

Outside of administration, he adds that the process of migrating the solution was a carefully planned and executed process. "Web Drive engineers provided clear communication and insight into all aspects of the project,

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Steve Simatos
Product Development Manager

setting clear timelines and outlining each of the steps which would be followed. It was a well orchestrated task; we were given a date on which we could start installing our software and testing with the customer – and Web Drive handed over two days early."

It was on the 'go-live' date of 14 July that the real proof of the pudding would be seen. "I'm happy to report that the solution that Web Drive proposed and then delivered has exceeded all expectations. When word got out within our customer that the system was performing so much better, it subsequently insisted that the hosting for a second system should be moved to the Web Drive platform," Simatos says.

Of course, few major system migrations are without some challenges; he says the inevitable hiccups have provided an ideal opportunity to assess the quality of support. "Recently, for example, the system was consuming a large amount of memory; Web Drive immediately identified that there was an issue, notified us and set about rectifying the issue. Our experience of the support it provides is therefore consistently satisfying, from engagement, to execution and on an ongoing basis."

Neil Webster, sales manager at Web Drive, says the company thrives on meeting unusual or complex hosting challenges. "In these scenarios, real value is added by getting to grips with the full extent of the requirement."

With Hindin, he continues, the company's engineers took the time to understand the structure of the Unison case management solution and then create an optimal architecture for the underlying hardware. "And since scalability without interruption is a hallmark of quality hosting services, we're ready to extend the platform as Hindin and its client may require."

A boost to business performance

Providing insight into the performance gains, Simatos says basic transactions previously took 10-12 seconds during peak times; reports were timing out after 1 minute or were taking 45-60 seconds to execute. "The customer wanted to achieve under 2 seconds for basic transactions, with reports delivered in less than 30 seconds."

The server provided by Web Drive processed all transactions while under heavy load testing around 1 – 1.5 seconds, with all reports executed in less than 10 seconds. "The net result was a 7 times performance improvement for basic transactions and a 9 times performance improvement for reporting. The end user experience changed from frustration using the software to great reviews of the software ease of use."

As a result of its engagement with Web Drive, Simatos says Hindin is equipped to run its own business better. "With the Unison solution hosted on its platform, we have a more satisfied customer. Having added additional features after the initial solution implementation, including a security appliance, we've got full confidence that if we need something done on our hosted platform, Web Drive will do it successfully."