



Claranet allows Sift to keep pace with technological advancements to better serve its customers

Sift

Digital media pioneer Sift depends on its digital channels to connect to and serve its customers. However, encumbered by out-of-date legacy technology, the company found it difficult to keep up with the developments in the digital arena and needed a responsive hosting provider to help them stay on top. For this, the company called on Claranet to provide a flexible and resilient Managed Hosting service, allowing Sift to provide a better service for its clients.

Sift is one of the UK's leading digital media companies, working with over 2,000 organisations to help them create valuable relationships with their audiences. Employing 145 staff, it works with a wide range of clients from Microsoft and Google to some of the UK's largest charities, including Cancer Research UK and WWF. Its digital arm, Sift Digital, for example, works to create communities and connections through website creation and effective online communication. With such a focus on digital communication, Sift's work would not be possible without a robust and scalable infrastructure platform.



Key services:

- Managed Hosting
- Colocation
- Internet Connectivity

The challenge

Yet, Sift faced a problem due to its reliance on legacy infrastructure architecture. Its server estate comprised of over 60 ageing and increasingly unreliable physical machines, firewalls and switch infrastructure, all of which they managed and maintained themselves. Single points of failure, complex wiring and hidden dependencies were leading to regular bouts of downtime; impacting the company's ability to serve its customers and develop its services. As Sift was wholly responsible for maintenance of its servers and network infrastructure, the company had to shoulder the risk in keeping them functional, spending an increasing amount of time and money in the process. In short, the company was relying on increasingly unreliable hardware, being continually forced to repair its infrastructure on its own time with its own resources.

Ben Heald, CEO of Sift, explained: "Using an outdated server infrastructure, we were experiencing multiple maintenance issues that were drastically impacting our digital growth and activity. Our on-call engineers were still having to restart servers in the middle of the night and even sometimes having to crawl under the racks. We were facing business risk through our old infrastructure, which couldn't continue. We needed a strong modern managed services provider to keep us up and running and at the forefront of new technological advances. That was why we turned to Claranet who working with Sift's CIO Chris Wood and his team have created a resilient, scalable and reliable infrastructure for our digital channels."



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The solution

The Sift solution uses a hardware infrastructure and virtualisation platform provisioned by Claranet while Sift provision and manage the application stack from the operating system upward. This combination has allowed for easy migration of Sift's entire business away from its legacy infrastructure and onto Claranet's enterprise-grade data centre infrastructure. The solution uses a fully managed infrastructure platform to host virtual machines, and is comprised of complete managed internet connectivity, complete with security features and resilient infrastructure. Claranet also provides co-location space to host Sift's own servers.

Ben continued: "Claranet now manages the infrastructure hardware layer directly, freeing up our technical teams to focus on where Sift can really add value - at the application layer delivering digital solutions to solve business problems; as opposed to purchasing, installing and supporting the core infrastructure hardware. In addition, our costs with Claranet are around 50 per cent lower than before, adding up to a six-figure saving, with lower capex costs as well."

“ *Data sovereignty is critically important, and Claranet is able to offer the assurances on data location we – and by extension, our customers – need.* **”**
Ben Heald, CEO of Sift

The result

Claranet's work with Sift is allowing the company grow its digital channels.

"The enhanced and reliable Managed Hosting solution Claranet provides allows us to focus on expansion, growth and our customers – safe in the knowledge that they will identify and deal with technical issues. For example, the infrastructure is strong enough for us to plan on globalising our leading UK accountancy site AccountingWEB. This would mean launching the business in up to ten countries across the world, all supported from our platforms at Claranet. In addition, in 2016 we'll be looking to burst out of the vPlatform to cloud infrastructure on demand. With increased cloud connectivity, we can not only increase our capacity on demand but also enhance our disaster recovery capabilities."

Ben concluded: "We're so excited to have Claranet as a trusted partner as our business grows. Not only have they reduced the risk to our business from server failure, but also supported our expansion through their reliable service. We look forward to this relationship deepening as we work together in the future."

For more information about Claranet's services, and the benefits these deliver, go to: www.claranet.co.uk

