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Issue 5

What is virtualisation and what can it do for you?

Everyone's talking about virtualisation. But what is it, and what are the benefits to your business?



In essence, virtualisation is a system which allows businesses to run a number of applications or operating systems from a single server, which otherwise would only be possible with several. In such a system, administrators can quickly move workloads from one virtual workspace to another, easily prioritising business needs while making the most of server resources. Virtualisation is an easily scalable solution, which can grow – or shrink – with a business.

Putting in place virtualisation can have a huge number of benefits for businesses. The first is obvious – a reduction in the amount of hardware you use. This means you can either use existing hardware elsewhere or dispose of it, reclaiming all the associated space for more productive purposes. And, because there is less physical equipment to deal with, the productivity of IT staff can be increased significantly.

Related to this is the reduction in carbon footprint, which in turn leads to a fall in energy costs of up to 90 per cent. Fewer servers also require less maintenance and less air conditioning, thus reducing the environmental impact of the company's network.

In addition to the direct cost and environmental benefits, virtualisation can offer security and business continuity advantages above and beyond a standard system. Organisations can not only achieve higher levels of availability, but also simplified backup and recovery strategies, meaning vital data can be protected more easily and retrieved more quickly. Because the whole process is easier for staff to manage, there is less opportunity for human error, meaning your information is more secure.

Virtualisation is becoming more and more popular among smaller and medium sized enterprises, as increasing numbers of companies recognise the advantages. Already, it is revolutionising the way in which forward-thinking businesses manage their IT systems, and, as financial pressures and environmental concerns continue to build, the future looks bright for virtualisation.

Are you interested in finding out more about virtualisation?

please do get in touch with us on
0845 128 5555, and we can discuss
the best solution for your business

top 10 tips

steps to a successful business!

Credit Control

It's especially important in these times to keep tight control of the credit terms you offer your customers. Insist that your new clients agree in writing to your payment terms. Invoices should be raised promptly. It is good practice to agree a payment date. Be prepared to generate electronic statements and copy invoices on demand and e-mail these to your customers as it's surprising how many documents go astray in the post! A well configured reminder system and electronic document generation system are essential.

Customer Contracts

While no-one should normally expect to have to refer to contracts to resolve a potential dispute, having well written and legally correct contracts in place sends out a message that you mean business. Now is a good time to review these in the light of current legislation and circumstances and ensure that they meet your needs. They should be communicated to all relevant parties in appropriate ways. These include on your corporate web site and referred to or reproduced in e-mail footers and hard copy documents such as delivery notes, invoices, statements and the like.

Robust HR systems

It is vital that you, as an employer, have correct, binding and fair contracts of employment in place. Get them checked by a professional and most importantly follow the processes and procedures in them at all times. Much of the administrative burden of employing people can be relieved by an automated HR system allowing managers and supervisors to get on with their jobs and deal with issues on an exception basis.

Integrated Systems

One of the frustrations encountered in many otherwise well run businesses is that of double keying of information. This is a great time waster and demoraliser and leads to errors which can be costly to rectify both in terms of time and image. Try to ensure that IT systems can talk to each other and that the whole process from beginning to end flows seamlessly without too much human intervention.

Green Issues

Whilst the paperless office is still more an ideal concept than it is a reality in most organisations it is still a worthwhile goal to aim for. Large organisations can take steps to reduce their carbon footprint by reducing the number of servers by consolidation and implementing print management policies. Smaller companies can do the same kind of thing by sending out and agreeing to receive documents such as invoices electronically. This can be as simple as an e-mail attachment or more sophisticated systems can exchange information using XML or other EDI techniques and protocols.

As local experts and having flourished over the last **25 years** we felt it only our duty to share our top our Ten Top Tips on how to come out of the tiresome credit crunch stronger and leaner.

CRM

Staying in touch with existing customers is vital, it costs a lot less to retain a customer that it does to acquire a new one. Data collection and knowledge is invaluable to the growth of your business, get to know your customer in order to provide them with a better service. Invest in a solid customer relationship management tool, it is fundamental. There are plenty of off the shelf CRM databases, but if that doesn't work for your business, it can be cost effective in the long term to have your own developed. Once in place ensuring staff use it effectively must not be forgotten. You're only as good as your last customer engagement.

Web Site

Your website is your shop window, its imperative it's not only up to date but relevant, effortless to read and concise. Devote time and money to your corporate image and branding, it adds value to your business and shows the customer you stand out from the crowd.

Accounts Reporting

80% of your profits come from just 20% of your customers/products/contracts. But do you know which 20%? Unless your computerised accounting system is capable or set up correctly to tell you then you probably don't know and therefore are unable to decide which areas of marketing to push.

Communication

Can you and your sales executives afford to be out of touch when away from the office? Blackberrys, PDAs and iPhones can all be set up to send and receive e-mails. A modern phone system can automatically route calls to you wherever you may be. Your mobile can act as if it's your extension at work and you only need one DDI contact number. This is called unified communications.

Business Continuity

Nowadays it's not sufficient to know that you have a back up of your data should the worst happen and your premises burn down. In a buyers' market any significant interruption to your supply business will send your customers scurrying to your competitors. Therefore it's imperative to have a contingency plan which guarantees that you can be up and running quickly following any occurrence which makes your primary place of work unavailable.

Interview with Patrick Kingsley-Williams, chairman and co-founder of mwl.



Q. How did you first get into the IT industry?

A. I studied electronics at university and pretty soon discovered that the world was going digital. It was a small step to take from microprocessors to data processing and I was fascinated by business applications.

Q. When did you start mwl?

A. In 1984 an opportunity arose to lead a Management Buyout from the receivers of a defunct computer company. We took on 13 staff and a number of support contracts and the rest as they say is history.

Q. What are the aspects of your job you most enjoy?

A. By attracting and retaining a first class team of IT professionals we are able to bid for and win significant large contracts time and again. I always get a buzz out of that.

Q. You've been in this business for 25 years, where do you see mwl, and indeed the industry, going in the next quarter of a century?

A. The pace of change will continue, and we will need to adapt to different technical ways of delivering IT services to our customers. The underlying principles however will endure, and there will always be a need for commercially aware and client focussed individuals to support end users.

Q. How do you unwind at the end of the week?

A. My wife, May, and I live on the side of a hill in a beautiful and quiet village in North Wales surrounded by fields full of sheep. I like nothing more than taking our dogs for a walk or pottering in the garden to relax.

mwl in the news

Age Concern appoints mwl

North East Wales Age Concern is investing in its IT infrastructure by appointing Wrexham-based independent technology solutions specialist, mwl, to ensure its systems run at optimum efficiency.

The charity has networked all its PCs which are vital to its day to day operations between its two offices in Mold and Wrexham. Each Age Concern is independent and has to raise its own funds to deliver its services, so any disruption could be disastrous for the charity, with the loss of important information needed to carry out its role in the community.

mwl won the contract following a four-way tender.

Vikki Curtis, deputy chief officer for the North East Wales organisation, commented: "Since the effects of the recession really began to be felt, Age Concern's services have been needed more than ever, so it is vital that our IT systems operate at peak efficiency. We appointed mwl to ensure that any problems are resolved immediately - essential to ensure that those relying on Age Concern continue to receive the help they need."

Matt Kingsley Williams, commercial manager at mwl, commented: "The cost of providing this service in house is prohibitive for many voluntary organisations and in these cost-conscious times it makes economic sense to outsource IT support to a specialist company like mwl."

mwl joins Dell's inner circle

Several publications recently printed our news of achieving Dell's Certified Partner status. "Our experience in providing hardware and software support, combined with the resources made available to us and our clients through the PartnerDirect program, strengthens our customer offering" said Patrick Kingsley-Williams, Managing Director of mwl, "we are proud to be one of only a few in the North West and North Wales."

The Digital Britain Report

Patrick recently commented on the Digital Britain report "the ambition to roll out 2Mbps broadband speed by 2012 is an incredibly modest ambition, while news of the broadband levy will be seen by both businesses and the public as another stealth tax. The government needs to encourage a lot more competition in terms of broadband provision. In a market dominated by BT, the Government needs to set ISP's against each other to encourage competition and bring down costs."



treats for you!

We regularly get recommended to new clients by our colleagues, business partners and clients, so we've decided we want to celebrate with you!

If you rate us highly enough to recommend our services or pass us a genuine lead that results in a new client, you'll receive some champers or retail vouchers to celebrate!

You'll also be entered into our annual gift draw. At the end of the year everyone who has recommended a friend that results in a new client, will be entered into a gift draw and the winner, randomly selected, will receive a gift that could be; the latest HD kit or gadget, a weekend away, a year's worth of your favourite tittle, or a once in a lifetime experience just in time for Christmas!

All you have to do is either ask the person you're recommending us to, to email us at raf@mwlsystems.co.uk or call us on 0845 128 5555 and make sure they give us your name and department / company name. You could also email raf@mwlsystems.co.uk with the contact details of your friend, colleague or business partner, and we'll contact them ourselves (make sure you let them know first though!)

Now for the rules....

- 1.** We must have either payment or a signed contract to deliver one of the below before the end of December 2009
- 2.** The new client must have purchased one of the following:
 - a.** A support contract
 - b.** IT consultancy
 - c.** An infrastructure project
 - d.** Software development or an applications based sale

Question time competition! win a case of wine!

1. Name your favourite Top Ten Tip?
2. What are the four blocks of our service offering?
3. What is the main topic of conversation in your company at the moment?

To enter email
treatme@mwlsystems.co.uk
good luck!

A Refreshing Change.

You may have already noticed that we've recently gone through a brand refresh and re launch of our website. We always stay one step ahead of our competitors; our new brand image combined with our years of experience puts us at the forefront of the industry. We are of course all things IT but we wanted to show off our fun yet professional approach to our work. The new website shows our straightforward method of engaging with our customers.

Check it out yourself and tell us what you think
email newweb@mwlsystems.co.uk



Go for IT

take our challenge

Our clients work with us because we increase their productivity and reduce costs, why don't you challenge us to do the same for you?

Email challenge@mwlsystems.co.uk or call 0845 128 5555 and quote 'challenge us 24' for your **FREE** consultation.

0845 128 5555
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