

CASE STUDY



Bennetts moves into the fast lane with virtualised infrastructure delivered in record time

ORGANISATION:

The United Kingdom's number one provider of bike insurance, insuring more than 240,000 motorcyclists in Great Britain and Northern Ireland

CHALLENGE:

After the Saga acquisition, Bennetts was tasked with updating its old infrastructure. This presented an opportunity to modernise and improve the company's system

SOLUTION:

Production e-commerce platform moved onto Datapipe's private cloud solution

DATAPIPE

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MODERNISING SYSTEMS WITH DATAPIPE'S PRIVATE CLOUD

THE CHALLENGE

Bennetts is the United Kingdom's number one provider of bike insurance and insures more than 240,000 motorcyclists in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Established in 1930, Bennetts has more than 85 years' experience in the insurance industry and has become one of the fastest growing insurance providers in the UK.

In 2000 Bennetts was the first motorcycle insurance specialist to launch its quote and buy facility online. The website now handles more than seven million visitors per year. In 2015 the Bennetts business was acquired by Saga plc.

Bennetts provides quotes to customers in three ways: via its website, through its call-centre, and to third-party insurance aggregators. Bennetts had been doing things in-house to deliver its service. The company had written its software stack in-house, using Microsoft .NET technology backed up by a SQL Server database and it ran its own infrastructure.

However, the acquisition by Saga plc presented a challenge to Bennetts as well as an opportunity. After the acquisition Bennetts was tasked with updating its old infrastructure.

This presented an opportunity to modernise and improve the company's system. Bennetts had a wish-list of requirements. It was looking to find a managed service provider who could deliver:

- An immediate move off its current IT infrastructure, with a committed timescale from the outset
- A robust disaster recovery solution
- An upgraded software and hardware plant as much of it was end of life. In the process of moving, Bennetts also wished to fully virtualise its legacy hardware
- This all needed to happen without disruption to its insurance business

With the acquisition process already in motion, Bennetts needed to move fast and find an innovative technology partner that was agile and flexible enough to move its entire application and web stack to the new infrastructure in the time available.

"Time was of the essence," said Jeff Weston, IT Director at Bennetts. "After the acquisition, we needed to not only move off the previous infrastructure quickly but also deliver a solution that met Saga's high standards for security and customer experience."

Insurance aggregators were another consideration. With a large percentage of customers coming via third party aggregator websites, Bennetts needed a scalable infrastructure that could turn around an insurance quote within a handful of seconds. If the infrastructure wasn't up to the job, Bennetts could be excluded from quote results which would severely impact revenue.

Demand for motorcycle insurance is not linear. Riders often only insure their motorcycles for the summer months. In the spring, Bennetts sees a large spike in demand from motorcycle riders wishing to insure their machines. An ability to scale up and scale down was something that Bennetts wanted to open themselves up to and so virtualisation was a requirement.

"We needed to facilitate the requirements of the insurance aggregators and we wanted to be able to scale our infrastructure," Weston said. "Many motorcyclists only ride in the summer so at the first sign of good weather we see much higher demand for insurance quotes."

Bennetts was looking for a partner to evaluate its current needs, take into consideration the requirements from its new owner, Saga plc, and deliver a new, robust, scalable solution that could grow with the company.

ENTER DATAPIPE

Bennetts had an existing relationship with Datapipe through a subsidiary's web hosting service and it had been impressed with Datapipe's excellent attention to service delivery and customer service. Through reputation, Bennetts realised that Datapipe had the

capability to take on this kind of challenge and invited them to tender for the project.

In the process of the tender, Datapipe committed to delivering the new infrastructure within the timescale required. Most importantly, it could fulfil all of Saga's requirements for a robust and secure environment, providing 100% uptime.

With Datapipe's guidance, Bennetts decided upon a secure and multi-tenant environment within Datapipe's own dedicated private cloud environment, with upgraded infrastructure and the capability to scale.

Datapipe also assisted with the ongoing effort to improve the infrastructure, to work with Bennetts to increase the stability of the platform, and to set up a new resilient solution spread across two data centres.

"Datapipe did an exemplary job. Not only did the team deliver in the short timeframe given, they continued to work to improve our infrastructure," Weston said. "We now have an upgraded, resilient solution that is monitored 24x7 and running on our private cloud. We are confident the infrastructure we have in place can support the business as it grows."

"With Bennetts we broke the mould. It was the fastest time to contract that we've delivered," said Scotty Morgan, Chief Sales Officer at Datapipe. "We had a secure private cloud solution ready to go and it was a great fit for Bennetts. From start to finish, the whole process to supply new upgraded infrastructure and migrate its data and applications took just four months."

OPERATIONAL IMPACT

RESULTS & BENEFITS

- Entire production e-commerce platform moved onto Datapipe's private cloud solution
- Active-active resilient server pair located across two data centres as well as a clustered database
- Upgraded infrastructure and capability to scale

In four months, the entire production e-commerce platform – including both the application stack and web stack – was moved onto Datapipe's private cloud solution. This included key parts of the business such as its business-critical aggregator service, call centre application, quoting engine, and pricing applications.

However, the work did not stop there. After the move onto Datapipe's private cloud solution, Datapipe spent the next six months building out a redundant solution that provided Bennetts with an active-active resilient server pair located across two data centres as well as a clustered database. An intelligent load balancer sat in front of the solution controlling the load from the web. This meant that if one data centre went offline for whatever reason, the load could automatically be redirected to the second data centre. In the process, the firewalls were redesigned.

Ultimately, Datapipe delivered a better solution to Bennetts in an impressively short timeframe. Bennetts have the support in place to facilitate future growth and cement its position as the premier motorcycle insurance provider.

DATAPIPE

A next generation MSP, Datapipe is recognised as the pioneer of managed services for public cloud platforms. Datapipe has unique expertise in architecting, migrating, managing and securing public cloud, private cloud, hybrid IT and traditional IT around the globe. The world's most trusted brands partner with Datapipe to optimise mission-critical and day-to-day enterprise IT operations, enabling them to transform, innovate, and scale. Backed by a global team of experienced professionals and world-class interconnected data centres, Datapipe provides comprehensive cloud, compliance, security, governance, automation and DevOps solutions. Gartner named Datapipe a leader in the Magic Quadrant for Cloud-Enabled Managed Hosting.

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