



BT is destination of choice for Tourism Ireland's private cloud

Tourism Ireland

The challenge

Tourism Ireland was established under the framework of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, jointly funded by the North and South to market the island to global tourism consumers. A decade of growth saw offices open in 13 countries, putting a strain on the IT infrastructure that was run primarily out of its Dublin headquarters. A small team of four IT people struggled to stay on top of internal IT requirements as well as its public facing websites. Like a lot of businesses, it grew organically and expedient IT investments resulted in an underutilised and inefficient environment.

An organisation of 160 people was running 100 servers yet still suffered downtime and had inadequate business continuity plans. Power outages in the Dublin office would bring the internal system down. If it happened over a weekend it could take until Monday afternoon to get everything up and running again. Poor resilience and general inefficiencies were reducing productivity as well as creating operational risks. New marketing projects that called for IT support took too long to implement.

The solution

BT had been successfully hosting Tourism Ireland's front-facing web sites, forging a strong relationship that helped it win the tender that went out to solve its wider IT challenges. The decision was taken to run the entire infrastructure out of a private cloud, hosted by BT who would deliver it back to Tourism Ireland as a managed service.

"We wanted a private cloud because it gave us the control and level of security we felt was important; we wanted a service that went from basic support to more complex services, delivered by someone who could become part of our IT department," recalls Conor Marshall, Head of ICT and Product strategy. BT offered the best value but it was their technical knowledge and range of services that swung it."

BT provided consultancy, design and delivery services that culminated in a private cloud implementation at its Citywest data centre in Dublin. An agnostic provider, BT brought together disparate suppliers to cover the server, storage and network requirements. Its skilled team focuses on the customer's business need rather than prescriptive solutions. One size definitely doesn't fit all with BT, which was important to Tourism Ireland because it was looking for a long-term partner rather than a one-off service provider.

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Conor Marshall

Head of ICT and Product Strategy, Tourism Ireland

The result

Virtualisation enabled Tourism Ireland to consolidate 100 servers down to 40 and move from two hardware racks to one, halving its data centre footprint and reducing its power and cooling costs. Overall, the reduction in hardware investments and warranties has contributed to a six figure saving as infrastructure was transferred from a capital cost to operational expenditure. Cutting costs has been one benefit of going with BT; increased efficiency is another. Downtime and outages are no longer an issue. If a problem occurs, restoring systems now takes minutes rather than hours. The virtual environment provides new levels of resilience to protect business critical applications and there's a disaster recovery plan in place to mitigate operational risks.

BT's private cloud has given Tourism Ireland the security and resilience it needed as well as the ability to scale. Provisioning new servers to drive new services is fast and easy. BT also took on the role of intermediary for Tourism Ireland, managing its partnerships with other suppliers such as Microsoft, HP and VMware, using a light governance model that keeps all parties alert to their on-going commitments. The global reach of BT has also played a part, helping Tourism Ireland stay connected to its overseas offices through BT's worldwide partnerships.

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Conor Marshall

Head of ICT and Product Strategy, Tourism Ireland

The value

The real value of the BT's relationship to Tourism Ireland is its partnership approach.

While the day-to-day infrastructure management is the responsibility of BT, the demarcation lines are very clear. The Tourism Ireland IT department remains very much in control. The difference is that they are now managing the managers rather than fire fighting technical problems and struggling to keep the lights on.

The partnership also comes into play around future plans, as Conor Marshall explains: “If we are thinking about a strategic initiative, we will seek out their advice and even do workshops with them to plan the best way to go. BT is always there to give us an expert opinion.” to Tourism Ireland because it was looking for a long-term partner rather than a one-off service provider.

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