



Centralised IT operations with Colt Ethernet

Customer

Marks & Clerk LLP

Sector

Intellectual Property Services

Business

Trademark and patent attorney

Challenge

Centralising its IT applications as part of a major growth and re-branding strategy

Services used

- Colt Ethernet Private Network (E-PN)
- Colt IP VPN MPLS
- Colt LANLink
- Colt IP Access (Managed)

Marks & Clerk, a world leader in intellectual property services, used Colt's advanced global Ethernet solution and technical expertise to help centralise its IT operations successfully as part of a major business restructuring programme - 'One Firm'.

Marks & Clerk is one of Europe's leading intellectual property firms and the largest in the UK, offering a comprehensive range of IP services covering patents, trade marks, designs and copyright with a truly global customer base. Over the past few years Marks & Clerk has undergone a major growth, acquisition and re-branding strategy, transforming itself from a network of associated regional offices across the UK to a single brand across the UK as well as France, Luxembourg, Canada and the Far East. The Marks & Clerk group also includes a specialised IP law firm Marks & Clerks Solicitors.

Marks & Clerk's 'One Firm' strategy aimed to ensure that clients get a consistent customer experience no matter which of its worldwide offices they contact, and that client work can be handled by any of its fee earners.

To deliver on this strategy, Marks & Clerk's IT department needed provide a common set of IT applications with new business

processes and also a new backup data centre to ensure systems availability and disaster recovery.

Business challenge

Marks & Clerk was using a number of different IT applications across its offices. IT Director Tim Roche and his team, needed to roll out a common set of IT applications from centralised servers, ranging from standard desktop functions to company specific applications, such as records and document management and time recording systems. They decided to centralise their IT systems into two data centres, the main one in London and a disaster recovery site in Birmingham, and rely on highly secure data networks to connect the two data centres and all the offices. This move would also pave the way for a switch to virtualisation technologies to improve efficiencies even more.

Marks&Clerk M&C



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Tim Roche

IT Director, Marks & Clerk LLP

// Colt was also able to provide the full range of services to meet our needs, both in the UK and internationally. Its pan-European network, which reaches all the key business centres in Europe, and its ability to connect our offices in the Far East, will be critical as we continue to expand. Colt stood out as the best choice for us because of the functionality of its solution and the exceptional technical expertise and support they offered, together with competitive pricing. //

Tim Roche

IT Director, Marks & Clerk LLP

Having rolled out the straightforward desktop applications such as email and Microsoft Office, Marks & Clerk realised they needed a more powerful data network to support their complex proprietary applications. The IP VPN MPLS solution they had in place did not offer enough bandwidth or flexibility to support a centralised IT strategy and had no disaster recovery back up. Mark & Clerk ran a competitive tender for a new global data network partner.

"We were open about the specific technology used but we were clear that we were looking for a single partner who could meet all our data networking needs and offer a robust disaster recovery solution and competitive pricing," said Tim Roche.

The solution

Marks & Clerk selected Colt as its new partner based on a four-part proposal by Colt's Professional Services team. A dedicated 1 Gb/s Ethernet connection would be used to provide a high bandwidth link between the main and disaster recovery data centres, with a 12Mb/s managed Internet connection into each of these sites. Colt's any-to-any Ethernet Private Network (E-PN) solution would connect the firm's 12 UK offices and its office in Luxembourg. Finally, a back-up solution based on IP VPN MPLS would provide instant failover in the event of a disruption to service.

"It rapidly emerged that Colt's Ethernet Private Network would be a great solution to connect our offices," said Roche. "It offers LAN to LAN connectivity so it is easy to run all our offices as a single entity. It's simple to manage and easy to scale the bandwidth up and down."

Colt's partner, technology solutions provider nscglobal, provided the integration services including failover between the E-PN and the back-up IP VPN and migration of its critical applications and internal network configuration from the current supplier to the new Colt network. Great care was taken to

ensure no disruption to the client's core business processes during the migration by using an overlay network and secondary data centre to ensure business continuity. The new solution went live in December 2008.

Why Colt?

"Our IT department is limited in size and it was very important to us that we had access to experienced technical people and support," said Roche. "We were very impressed with the technical consultants at Colt. We worked with a superb consultant who really understood our needs and converted the initial network designs into a real life solution.

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What's next?

Marks & Clerk's new network solution is now operational and the firm is very happy with the service and support they get from Colt. It can also continue the move towards a virtualised IT environment in future. Roche concluded, "Colt's solution supports our organisation very well today and crucially, it can be expanded as we grow our business. Our next milestone will be to extend the network to the Far East to connect our offices in China and Singapore."

Next step

To arrange a consultation or to discuss how Colt can help you:

Call: +44 (0) 20 7390 3900

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