Case Study:

Specialist pre-media production company opts for StingRay to drive down file transfer costs.

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Hermstedt StingRay
The multi protocol File Transfer Server

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Abstract

CTT solves tracking and logging dilemma, automates file transfer and eliminates monthly subscriptions costs with the StingRay file transfer server.

Background

Formally part of the The Economist Group, CTT formed in 1987 following a management buyout. Specialising in pre-media magazine production, CTT have developed beyond traditional pre-press techniques to embrace the significant technological changes that have taken place during the last 25 years.

CTT's commitment to fulfilling customer expectations has lead to its involvement with some of the UK's leading publishers including IPC Media, Nature Publishing Group, Findlay Media, contract publishers ALAD Ltd as well as numerous independent publishers.

Problem

As a pre-media magazine production company, CTT have an ongoing requirement to send large artwork files to printers worldwide. Aware of the cost implications associated with ongoing courier costs and the attachment limitations linked with the use of email for large file transfer, CTT have been utilising alternative file transfer solutions for the past 10 years. WAM!NET's direct service was their primary file transfer solution more recently accompanied by a basic FTP site, introduced due to requests for FTP file submissions made by many print sites looking to evolve their workflows.

Although able to fulfill the primary objective of sending large files in a time efficient manner Mark Unstead, Managing Director of CTT, reached the conclusion that their current file delivery systems required an overhaul. One motivation for this overhaul was the print industries migration to the use of FTP for file transfer, sparking the move away from WAM!NET's managed service. This was not the sole reason for retiring this file transfer solution as WAM!NET was costing the company over £1000 per month in service charges. Mark Unstead explained, "Cost implications had a massive impact on using the WAM!NET system and were eventually too much to absorb in the current financial climate."

Once the decision had been made to move away from WAM!NET's managed service, research began into FTP based file transfer solutions. Although CTT had an existing FTP solution in place it was just too basic to meet the needs of the organisation. Rudimentary, undeveloped FTP servers lack the notification, auditing and reporting features that are now essential in a secure modern business environment. Not only do these features offer peace of mind with confirmation of successful transmissions, they provide organisations with a full log of all file transfer activities – a crucial security measure.

Solution

Mark was faced with the task of sourcing a reliable FTP solution that offered superior functionality, all at an affordable price. It was at this point Mark approached Pro2col to discuss StingRay. "We had known about StingRay for a few years and had seen Pro2col at many tradeshows" says Mark. "I maintained regular contact with certain members of the team and had found them to be a young, forward thinking company who knew what our needs were and had solutions for any problems we presented them with".

Alternative options were explored such as creating a bespoke, scripted FTP system with delivery options built in but CTT's users found this approach to be unreliable and inconsistent. Mark came to the decision that "StingRay offered a simple, easy to use FTP workflow with full accountability for all files sent and clear confirmations of files delivered to the correct print sites" and the real deciding factor was the fact that "the price of StingRay (including annual service agreement) made it the best solution for our needs. The only other vendors offering similar products seem to have a pricing structure way above any reasonable level for the service that they are providing".

It was not just StingRay's increased functionality and affordable price tag that prompted Mark's decision. The StingRay server offered the ability to integrate file transfer seamlessly into their existing workflow as well as providing hot folder sending. This feature would facilitate the introduction of a certain level of automation within the company's file transfer processes as it allows users to simply drag and drop or deliver files using an internal FTP workflow into the desired hot folders, which are monitored and pushed out to the desired location at regular intervals.

Results

Since it's install in June 2009, StingRay has been used on a daily basis for supplying files to CTT's customers and print sites worldwide. The StingRay file transfer server has made the process of sending files considerably easier for staff with its user-friendly desktop client application. Even more importantly from a business perspective Mark added, "StingRay has had such a positive effect with our customers, who can now clearly see all of the information they require post file transfer."

Another noteworthy improvement following the StingRay's install has been the automation of file sending. The ability for users to create hot-folders has eliminated the need to manually produce and send individual jobs, saving valuable time that can now be spent on more productive tasks.

The most significant impact of the solution has been financial. "StingRay has had an immediate financial benefit of over £15,000 per annum", Mark disclosed, as its installation has eliminated the need for a monthly subscription cost. Mark sums up his experience to date since the solutions install 2 months prior, "StingRay provides immeasurable time benefits with the automation of reports that it produces, this leaves me to be a very satisfied customer".