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## Overview

### Business challenge

With a growing business and exponentially increasing amounts of electronic data, the ageing IT infrastructure at Adam Architecture was groaning, affecting productivity within the practice.

### Solution

IBM Business Partner ABS Digital worked closely with Adam Architecture to design and implement a flexible, integrated IT platform based on IBM System x<sup>®</sup> servers and IBM System Storage<sup>™</sup>. ABS Digital manages the new infrastructure and provides a System Administrator onsite at Adam Architecture three mornings a week.

### Customer benefits

- Increased productivity due to greatly improved network speed and reliability
  - Improved, automated backup and tape management
  - Cost-effective and easy to manage systems
  - Stable, scalable platform for future growth.
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# Adam Architecture

*Designs for its data explosion with IBM platform from ABS Digital*

As its volume of business grew, Adam Architecture found its ageing IT platform struggling to cope with growing amounts of data. The network was grinding to a halt as use of the Internet escalated, the volume of emails expanded and increasing numbers of the extremely large CAD files used for architectural design work were transferred around the system.

With no in-house IT department, Adam Architecture needed a partner to provide strategic advice on how to meet business requirements both now and into the future. That partner also had to implement any required changes and support the IT infrastructure.

IBM Business Partner, ABS Digital designed and deployed a new platform for Adam Architecture based on IBM System x servers and IBM System Storage.

The architectural practice is enjoying much improved levels of speed and performance from its network backed by high-quality, ongoing support from ABS Digital.

An award winning practice with a worldwide reputation as one of the UK's leading practitioners in traditional architecture and urban masterplanning, Adam Architecture has offices in Winchester and London. The firm works throughout Britain as well as in the US, continental Europe, the near East and Japan. Around 65 people are employed in the main offices in Winchester with a further six in London. In Winchester, staff are located in four adjacent buildings connected by fibre optic cable.

“Our chosen partner, ABS Digital, is very professional in its approach and we feel the company is a good match for Adam Architecture – not too big, but large enough to have sufficient breadth and depth of expertise,” says Nigel Afford, Practice Manager at Adam Architecture.

### Time for change

With users growing increasingly frustrated at the amount of disruption and lost productivity caused by an inadequate IT system, ABS Digital worked closely with Adam Architecture to examine current challenges and likely business requirements for the next three years.



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– Nigel Afford, Practice Manager at Adam Architecture

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In addition to network performance, the practice had challenging storage and data backup issues. Adam Architecture is required to keep archived versions of project-related CAD and image files for 12 years. The storage system has to manage these extremely large files and keep them easily accessible. Furthermore, critical CAD and image files were backed up daily to a single tape drive. The volume of data had grown so great that the back up could no longer be completed overnight and was regularly overrunning, using precious server capacity during the working day.

Adam Architecture had a further requirement. Twelve senior members of staff rely heavily on BlackBerry handsets when away from the office. The practice was keen to integrate its mobile devices more effectively with other systems such as corporate email and to increase standardisation in the way that all systems are managed.

### **IBM validated solution**

ABS Digital's first task at Adam Architecture was re-cabling parts of the network's fibre backbone and optimising the configuration to ensure improved performance. This was followed by a comprehensive proposal to address performance and storage issues for at least the next three years by implementing two IBM System x3650 servers and an IBM System x3250 backup server in Winchester plus an IBM System x3650 server in London. IBM System Storage DS 3400 and IBM TotalStorage® SAB16B-2 contributed to an affordable, scalable, 16 terabyte storage solution with a tape library for the backup procedure. The proposal also provided for a more consistent and sophisticated enterprise messaging platform by deploying Microsoft™ Exchange 2007 to offer better integration between the Winchester and London offices and between office based and mobile BlackBerry systems.

Steven Dawkins, Managing Director at ABS Digital says: “IBM was closely involved in validating the solution we recommended to Adam Architecture. This is one of the advantages of becoming an IBM Business Partner, we have access to IBM expertise whenever we need it. It's reassuring for us and for our clients.”



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Afford confirms: “I found it extremely comforting to know that the solution we were buying from ABS Digital was audited by IBM. It’s valuable additional protection.”

Implementation of the new platform took place over four weekends. “Generally speaking it was simple and easy,” says Dawkins. “Naturally we met challenges but when this happened the support we received from IBM was exceptional. IBM experts understand their products at a very deep level. As a safeguard for Adam Architecture, we designed the installation so that if any stage didn’t go to plan we could revert back to the old system to minimise disruption to business users.”

### **Proactive management and support**

With the new IT platform successfully in place, ABS Digital’s approach to its management differentiates it from many of the other potential partners that Adam Architecture originally considered. Rather than selling the practice a set number of support hours, ABS Digital optimises the service provided to IT users by providing a system administrator who works on site three mornings a week.

“ABS Digital acts as a helpdesk facility and can provide remote maintenance at any time but, with no real IT resource of our own, having a system administrator on site three times a week is extremely useful and keeps our services running optimally. I work very closely with him and have picked up numerous tips on how we can use the functionality of Microsoft Exchange to work more effectively,” says Afford.

### **Increased productivity and reliability**

The main advantage of Adam Architecture’s new solution is the improved network speed and reliability. Users can now access, save and move files and emails around the system quickly and efficiently, eliminating costly and frustrating delays during the working day and greatly improving overall productivity.

The sophisticated storage system has not only provided greater capacity, it has automated backup processes and tape management, removing time consuming manual processes and improving reliability.

Dawkins says: “The fact that the new solution is run entirely on an IBM platform makes it easy to manage. IBM hardware is also much smaller than some competitor equipment so it saves space on the client site.”

Adam Architecture now has a stable, flexible, scalable IT platform with sufficient capacity to support predicted business requirements for the next three years and beyond.

### **For more information**

Please contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner. Visit us at: [ibm.com/expressadvantage/uk](http://ibm.com/expressadvantage/uk)



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