



//ASOS increases its virtual shop front with HP Blade Servers

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ASOS, founded in 2000, is the UK's largest online fashion and beauty store, attracting more than one million visitors a week. With over 9,000 products available and 500 new lines added each week, the website asos.com is the company's shopfront for 2.6 million shoppers every month.

Too many servers

ASOS creates and updates its website using a large (and growing) team of in-house developers. Its servers were slowing the team's progress; there were not enough servers to allow them to develop and test changes to the site properly. The most efficient way to do this was to give each project team their own copy of the site, running in a separate set of servers. That way, they could test changes without breaking the live site and without treading on the toes of another team working on a different part of the site.

Simon Hamblin, ASOS's enterprise architect, estimated that they would need up to 60 new standalone servers to support ongoing projects at the end of 2007. However, the development team was growing rapidly and the server requirement increasing.

Blades and virtualisation

The number of machines and the cost of supporting them seemed unnecessarily high, so Hamblin turned to HP Blade Servers and virtualisation instead. ASOS bought ten fully loaded HP Blade Servers. Using VMware to manage virtual servers, these systems allow the developers to create temporary instances of the site as needed. In addition, ASOS bought an HP Enterprise Virtual Array (EVA) 6100 storage array and Storage Area Network (SAN) fabric, which provided the necessary storage for virtual servers. RichardsonEyes, an HP Authorised Business Solution Partner, helped ASOS and recommended HP hardware. "They got straight to the point, listened to our requirements and came up with a good solution," says Hamblin.

“ Scalability is the actual key for us. Going forward, if we double or triple our development team, we need a scalable solution. And, compared with standalone servers, HP's Blade Servers are easier to manage, upgrade and support ”

Simon Hamblin, enterprise architect, ASOS

Huge savings

The new servers solved a major problem for ASOS. The fast growing website development team can get on with developing new features without risking any interruption to the live ecommerce site.

They have highly reliable, high-performance kit to help them be more productive.

The system is scalable and flexible enough to support the company's growth and future plans for disaster recovery and business continuity. "Scalability is the actual key for us," says Hamblin. "Going forward, if we double or triple our development team, we need a scalable solution.

Compared with standalone servers, HP's Blade Servers are easier to manage, upgrade and support."

Most importantly, ASOS has saved a lot of money compared with buying standalone devices. Hamblin estimates the capital cost of going down the standalone route at around £600,000, plus the man-power costs of installing and managing dozens of separate computers would be substantially more than the total budget for the system they actually bought. ASOS has a vision and an ambitious plan for growth. HP and RichardsoNEyres were able to deliver "a good all-round solution that fitted our budget. They got it done," concludes Hamblin.

Huge savings have been a massive benefit for ASOS. It is estimated that the capital cost of going down the standalone route would have been around £600,000, plus the man-power costs would have been substantially more than the total budget for the system they actually bought from HP.

Challenge

- ASOS is the UK's largest online fashion and beauty store, attracting more than one million visitors a week. Due to a growing team of web developers and slowing servers, the team's progress was being affected.

Solution

- HP Blade Servers
- VMware
- HP Enterprise Virtual Array (EVA) 6100 storage array
- HP Storage Area Network (SAN) fabric

Results

- The new servers have solved a major problem for ASOS. The fast-growing website development team can get on with developing new features without risking any interruption to the live ecommerce site.
- The new highly reliable, high performance kit has enabled the team to be more productive. The new system is flexible enough to support the company's growth and future plans.
- HP Blade Servers and virtualisation enabled the developers to test and work on the site without any interruption to the live ecommerce site.
- Huge savings have been a massive benefit for ASOS. It is estimated that the capital cost of going down the standalone route would have been around £600,000, plus the man-power costs would have been substantially more than the total budget for the system they actually bought from HP.

// Richardson Eyres provides solutions for data centre consolidation. It works with its customers to streamline IT infrastructures, freeing up time, resources and ultimately saving its customers' money.

Richardson Eyres develops long-term and mutually beneficial relationships working with its customers to ensure that it provides bespoke solutions to help their business run efficiently, effectively and above all, profitably.

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It has partnerships with HP and VMware, and is one of a small number of HP Professional Services Partners (PSP) in the UK. It also provides solutions for companies globally, from their offices in the UK and the US.

With over 20 years experience as a data centre consultant, Richardson Eyres has extensive technical knowledge and the know-how to apply this knowledge to help organisations run their IT infrastructures more efficiently. Established in 1986, the company is privately owned and its headquarters is in Chesham, Buckinghamshire.
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