Case study

Industry sector: manufacturing

A perfect image on a BT dedicated hosting platform

By outsourcing web-based services to BT, Canon España has achieved greater profitability, more reliability and tighter security.

Executive summary

As the Spanish subsidiary of the Canon Group of companies, Canon España has an impressive network of distributors and agents, including 30 support centres across Iberia. Employing over 1,000 staff, the company’s central office and large distribution facility in Madrid housed a series of critical web-based services, including a corporate web page, intranet, e-mail solutions and a number of corporate applications.

In the light of growing internet security risks to its Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solutions, however, Canon España outsourced part of its IT infrastructure to BT, which provided a dedicated hosting platform. This decision was also promoted by the need to achieve guaranteed 24*7 availability to a broad range of corporate users.

“The relationship between Canon España and BT is based on mutual respect. Working with BT’s highly qualified team has helped us understand our own needs and clarify priorities based on BT’s thorough and valid advice.”

Miguel Angel Escribano
CIO Chief Information Officer
Canon España

The resulting tailor-made BT solution gave Canon España greater profitability by consolidating its IT services, increased security through BT’s Internet Gateway and improved availability. It also enabled Canon España staff to focus on core business issues rather than IT, and look to the future with confidence knowing BT was able to respond immediately to its changing requirements.
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Marketplace
Canon España is the Spanish subsidiary of the renowned Canon Group of companies. Famed for its market-leading photographic, digital printing and information technology solutions, its success was highlighted in 2003 when it returned consolidated net sales of nearly $30 billion, of which around 75 per cent was generated outside Japan. With 198 associated companies employing approximately 102,500 employees, Canon’s worldwide reputation has been secured through the utilisation of state-of-the-art technologies, unwavering R&D programmes and a commitment to the highest quality of service.

Canon España perpetuates this ethos in Spain through a central office and large distribution centre located in Madrid. With a further 30 support centres established at various sites throughout Iberia, the company enjoys a prominent market presence, employs around 1,000 staff and has an integrated network of distributors and support staff.

Business opportunity
To achieve and maintain a truly integrated corporate structure, Canon España used a series of critical web-based services housed at its Madrid premises. These included a corporate web page, intranet, e-mail solutions and a number of corporate applications. Access to these resources was achieved via internet, extranet and intranet portals depending on whether the users were customers, agents or Canon employees.

The significance of these communications could not be overestimated, especially as they represented the primary method of linking the company’s management, distribution and support functions. As a consequence, achieving guarantee 24×7 availability to those services became Canon España’s overriding IT goal. This was closely followed by the desire to provide greater safeguards in the light of increasing internet security risks. Indeed the integrity of internet links and connections made by Canon España employees and agents to an AS/400 server housing the company’s ERP solution and several Oracle servers supporting its CRM solution was critical.

To adequately achieve a properly implemented and responsibly managed internet security policy, Canon España’s technical team explored the possibility of outsourcing part of its IT infrastructure to a single telecommunications solution provider. It was essential that the partner entrusted with housing Canon España’s IT infrastructure would be an operator with the capacity and relevant experience to deliver the varied objectives of the project as well as manage and provide network communication services.

Miguel Angel Escribano, CIO Chief Information Officer at Canon España, says: “The constant availability and integrity of our web-based information services are critical to effective communications within the business. It is important to ensure that the right users gain the appropriate level of access regardless of where they are or at what time they require the information.”

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BT solution

Canon España and BT worked closely together to define the project’s scope and requirements and to design an IT infrastructure management and security solution that would exactly meet Canon’s needs. In addition, BT agreed to install the solution, and monitor and administer some of the components.

Miguel Angel Escribano says: “The relationship between Canon España and BT is based on mutual respect. Working with BT’s highly qualified team has helped us understand our own needs and clarify priorities based on BT’s thorough and valid advice. For instance, BT was able to provide us with detailed information about general and sector-specific trends in IT. This invaluable experience gave us confidence about what we were doing.”

The result of this collaboration was a dedicated hosting platform at BT’s Data Center in Madrid that included eight servers housing Canon España’s corporate web page (www.canon.es), its e-mail services, corporate applications and the company’s entire extranet.

Results

The objectives of the project were far ranging and complex. Providing access for a varied group of users, to a wide selection of information, on a 24*7 basis with scalability was challenging. As important was providing security and reliability. While the objectives were numerous, the advantages enjoyed by Canon España following the introduction of BT’s dedicated service can be summarised in five points:

- Greater profitability – since this solution incorporates different components corresponding to network infrastructure, systems and management resources, Canon España benefits from having BT as a sole provider – one point of contact, one invoice
- Greater security – Canon España can work in a more secure environment without jeopardising the productivity of its employees thanks to the layers of security offered by the BT Internet Gateway
- Availability – the bandwidth provided by the BT Data Centre housing services adapts immediately to Canon España’s requirements, meaning services and applications outsourced to BT are available constantly without any dropouts due to traffic peaks
- Managed services – by entrusting BT with the management and administration of these services, Canon España can dedicate its resources to tasks more closely related to its main line of business. It also means the company no longer has to invest in training to ensure that its own employees can evaluate and update systems
- Scalability – whenever Canon needs to increase or modify the capacities of any of the components of the solution, BT is able to respond to its changing requirements and implement an immediate solution

As Miguel Angel Escribano points out, the benefits of the BT Internet Gateway solution have ensured appropriate access under secure conditions. He concludes: “BT has helped us make Canon’s management and information services always available to those who need them, in a reliable and secure manner. The BT Data Centre is at the core of Canon’s network.”

Why BT?

- BT’s capacity and infrastructure enabled it to provide Canon España with the latest technologies
- BT’s commercial agreements with system integrators and software and hardware developers allowed it to transform its purchasing power into economies of scale that were transferred to Canon España
- With experience and knowledge, BT was able to deliver reliable and dependable advice based on proven success in similar projects
- Benefiting from a highly qualified team, BT not only helped construct preliminary designs but also contributed to the rigorous analysis of each one
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Technology blueprint

With guaranteed security a prime objective, the dedicated Internet Gateway service was implemented using security components managed and controlled by BT. These included the following elements:

- Proxy server – ensures all internet requests are made through a single server installed at the BT Data Centre
- Anti-viral software – filters incoming e-mails, http and ftp traffic to prevent compromises in network security
- Content filtering – allows Canon to determine which web pages can be accessed from its corporate network and by whom
- Anti-spam for e-mail – prevents the entry of spam or junk mail through constantly updated rules and configurations
- E-mail relay and e-mail antivirus provisions – filters and eliminates all viruses in the mail exchange between Virtual Private Network (VPN) users
- Dedicated firewall – increases security provided by the shared firewall at the common BT Data Centre front end by enabling Canon España to personalise its access rules

The design was complemented by back-end (outgoing) connections that allow Canon España to connect to BT via a 100Mbps Frame Relay connection with a 2Mbps back-up line. A firewall router that delivers maximum levels of security and availability protects this connection.

Main BT products & services

- BT Internet Gateway solution
- BT network consultancy services
- Various security components, including an internet proxy server, http/ftp anti-viral software, content filtering, anti-spam for e-mail, e-mail relay and e-mail antivirus provisions and a dedicated firewall

Offices worldwide

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