



Customer: Tenon Group
Web Site: www.tenongroup.com
Number of Employees: 1,900
Country or Region: United Kingdom
Industry: Financial services

Customer Profile

Incorporated in February 2000, Tenon Group is the ninth-largest firm of accountants and business advisers in the U.K. It employs 1,900 people across a network of more than 40 offices throughout the country.

Software and Services

- Microsoft Server Product Portfolio
 - Windows Server 2008 Enterprise
 - Microsoft System Center Virtual Machine Manager 2008
- Technologies
 - Hyper-V

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Accountants and Business Advisers Use Virtualisation to Save Nearly £100,000

“With Hyper-V, we can rapidly adapt to the needs of our business. By reducing power consumption and increasing the efficiency of our servers, we can support future expansion.”

Richard Dallimore, Group IT Systems Manager, Tenon Group

Accounting and business advisory firm Tenon Group wanted to improve the efficiency and cost effectiveness of its primary data centre. It deployed both Windows Server® 2008 Enterprise operating system with its Hyper-V™ virtualisation technology, and Microsoft® System Center Virtual Machine Manager 2008. The solution saved the company almost £100,000 (U.S.\$159,000) in operational costs, improved server utilisation, and supported the expansion of the business.

Business Needs

Tenon Group is the ninth-largest firm of accountants and business advisers in the United Kingdom (U.K.) and has a focus on advising entrepreneurs. Established in February 2000, the company has expanded rapidly since its incorporation despite challenging economic conditions. It has more than 40 offices throughout the country and employs 1,900 people who provide a range of services, including accounts and audits, corporate finance, tax, outsourcing, and turnaround advice. Over the past five years, the company has doubled in size, and its turnover in 2008 was £160 million.

This rapid expansion has been supported by an effective and intelligent use of business technology. An example of this is the deployment of the company's centralised data centre in Milton Keynes, south-east England. It comprises 42 servers and storage running in a mixed environment, including various editions of the Windows®, Linux, and UNIX operating systems. As Tenon Group increased in size, additional servers were deployed in the data centre to support the growing needs of the business. Richard Dallimore, Systems Manager at Tenon Group, says: “Every time we opened a new

office we would add more hardware to our data centre. For a time, this solution was successful and we could sustain our rate of expansion.”

But this approach presented a number of challenges. The increasing amount of hardware was putting a greater demand on the data centre’s power consumption and physical space was coming under tighter constraints. Many servers were also operating below optimum efficiency, with some running at just 20 per cent capacity. Dallimore says: “We decided to adopt a more strategic policy. We were aware of the potential of virtualisation and its ability to cut hardware costs and increase server use, but the solutions we examined previously simply weren’t cost-effective. So when we discovered the latest virtualisation technology from Microsoft we were eager to find out more.”

Solution

It didn’t take long for Tenon Group to decide to deploy Microsoft virtualisation technology. Dallimore says: “Not far into our evaluation of the market, we realised the best option was Windows Server 2008 Enterprise and its integrated virtualisation technology, Hyper-V. Four virtual server licences are included in Windows Server 2008 Enterprise, which helps to reduce costs significantly. Also, we already have a strong relationship with Microsoft and we use many of its technologies in our IT environment, so we knew Hyper-V would integrate seamlessly with our systems and that user adoption wouldn’t be a problem.”

In addition to Hyper-V, Tenon Group implemented System Center Virtual Machine Manager 2008. With this tool, its IT technicians can immediately oversee the RAM and processing speed of all host servers in production. They can also remotely provision new systems quickly and perform physical to

virtual migrations of existing servers in the data centre.

Tenon Group tested its first Hyper-V server in June 2008. It initially deployed the beta version and the success of the trial encouraged Dallimore to implement the solution throughout the rest of the data centre. The company continued to roll out the technology for the remainder of the year and now has 10 physical servers running Hyper-V, operating a total of 51 virtual servers.

This deployment phase proceeded without complications. Dallimore says: “We built most of the servers from scratch but occasionally had to perform some physical to virtual migrations. This was much easier than we thought. For example, we performed an offline migration of a mobile communications server in one hour. Usually, it would have taken a group of engineers one day, with the server being offline all that time.”

Benefits

The deployment of Hyper-V virtualisation technology has cut the cost and power consumption of the Milton Keynes data centre. It also reduced the number of administrative tasks performed by IT staff, helping them adopt a more strategic role in the organisation. Dallimore says: “With Hyper-V, we can rapidly adapt to the needs of our business. By reducing power consumption and increasing the efficiency of our servers, we can support future expansion.”

■ Reduces IT costs by nearly £100,000.

Tenon Group has made substantial savings since deploying Hyper-V. The company reduced its hardware and licensing costs by an estimated £52,500,

and it decreased its ongoing power and rack requirements, saving about £42,720 a year.

- **Increases server utilisation.** With Virtual Machine Manager 2008, systems administrators get an instant overview of which servers are being used efficiently. Dallimore says: “Currently, we’re still below 50 per cent utilisation of our Hyper-V host servers, so there’s plenty of room for expansion.”
- **Decreases physical space requirements.** Dallimore and his team no longer need to worry about space constraints in the data centre because each physical server can host six virtual machines.
- **Provides remote management capabilities.** Engineers can remotely create and maintain virtual servers. As they no longer have to travel to sites, this has saved them more than 100 working hours and reduced the company’s carbon footprint.
- **Improves business agility.** Technicians can remotely set up a virtual machine in just one hour, without needing to leave the office. Previously, it would have taken two weeks to fully deploy a physical server, including ordering, testing, and installation.
- **Enhances data security.** With Hyper-V, Dallimore and his team can take live backup copies of virtual machines at any point in time. This is useful for testing new hardware because the team can roll back to the latest working configuration if a server fails.