Camelot
saves £1 million and improves online gaming experience with new datacenter platform

Customer agenda
- Growth/business change
- Continuous improvement/ innovation
- Risk avoidance
- Cost reduction

Solution overview
- Dynamic Datacenter

Technology
- IBM POWER7 servers
- IBM BladeCenter H chassis
- IBM Storwize v7000 storage

Customer challenge

As operator of The National Lottery, Camelot's objective is to maximise returns to National Lottery Good Causes through selling tickets in a socially-responsible way. Each week, Camelot generates over £35 million for National Lottery Good Causes and, to date, National Lottery players have raised over £30 billion for lottery-funded projects.

This makes The National Lottery one of the UK's leading consumer brands, with around 70 per cent of UK adults playing nowadays and over six million people winning prizes every week. To meet increasing demand, Camelot is developing a new interactive gaming platform, which requires a flexible and reliable datacenter back-end. Camelot also needs to ensure its critical business processes and 50 ERP systems are underpinned by robust technologies.

Computacenter solution

Camelot partnered with Computacenter to benchmark and evaluate a number of datacenter solutions to support its ERP environment and online gaming platform. Based on a total cost of ownership (TCO) analysis and proof of concept exercise, the two companies selected a solution based on IBM technologies. Computacenter worked alongside IBM to design, configure and deploy the solution across Camelot's two datacenters.

Results

The new datacenter environment will reduce operating costs for Camelot by around £1 million over five years. It has also helped to increase efficiency and reduce risk, and will provide Camelot with the flexibility and scalability it needs to grow its online gaming capabilities and revenue generation for National Lottery Good Causes.

December 2013

Customer profile

Putting players first

As operator of The National Lottery, Camelot's objective is to maximise returns to National Lottery Good Causes through selling tickets in a socially-responsible way. Each week, Camelot generates over £35 million for National Lottery Good Causes and more than six million people win prizes on National Lottery games.

Camelot has been operating The National Lottery since it launched in 1994, and has an extended licence term until 2023.

Since its inception, The National Lottery has raised £30 billion for the Good Causes, with more than 420,000 individual awards made across the UK – an average of 135 lottery grants for every postcode district. This includes a £2.2 billion contribution towards the cost of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Camelot operates the most cost-efficient major lottery in Europe, with only four per cent of revenues spent on operating costs. It employs around 900 members of staff, the majority of which are based at its head office in Watford, Hertfordshire.

In addition to its success in the UK, Camelot hosts and runs the technology for EuroMillions – the pan-European game which runs across nine countries – alongside the Spanish Lottery Operator LAE (Loterías y Apuestas del Estado). It also provides consulting services to the Interprovincial Lottery Corporation of Canada and the Massachusetts State Lottery.

Business challenge:

Supporting online gaming and core business processes

Camelot's national-lottery.co.uk website supports millions of active players per week. On an average Saturday evening, the website handles thousands of transactions per minute, but this number of transactions can double when major jackpots are at stake.

To take advantage of the increase in online playing and safeguard revenues, Camelot has embarked on a major project to develop a new interactive gaming platform. Mark Wheeler, Head of IT Service Delivery at Camelot, explains: "Our aim is to provide a consistent customer experience across multiple channels, regardless of whether the customer is buying a ticket in-store, on their mobile or online."

Camelot needed a datacenter infrastructure that could cope with predicted business growth as well as peaks in demand in online gaming. This requirement coincided with the hardware platform supporting Camelot's SAP ERP (enterprise resource planning) reaching end of life.

With the SAP system supporting all financial activities for the company and its contact centre operations, it was essential to day-to-day business and staff productivity.

"To meet regulatory requirements from our regulator, the Gambling Commission, we have to be on a supported, modern and maintainable system," comments Mark.

"This meant we needed to upgrade our SAP platform to the latest operating systems."

To minimise disruption, Camelot decided to combine the two refresh requirements into a single datacenter project. With significant investments and business-critical systems involved, Camelot had to ensure it selected technologies that would support its current and future needs.

"The datacenter environment will support our efforts to keep operating costs as low as possible, while enabling us to launch exciting new online games that increase revenue generation for National Lottery Good Causes."

**Mark Wheeler,
Head of IT Service Delivery,
Camelot**

IT solution

A proven and cost-effective solution

Camelot turned to existing IT partner Computacenter to help with the project. "We wanted an independent view of the datacenter technologies available," explains Mark. "Computacenter had good market knowledge as well as an in-depth understanding of our business drivers, challenges and roadmap."

The two companies have worked together since 2009, with Computacenter having assisted with various IT projects in the past, including a major desktop transformation.

For this latest project, Computacenter worked closely with Camelot's internal IT team to benchmark a number of vendor solutions, with a particular focus on the total cost of ownership.

Following the paper-based benchmarking exercise, Computacenter helped Camelot conduct a comprehensive onsite proof of concept (POC) using loan hardware from IBM. Mark comments: "With a 'true cost' analysis, POC evidence and Solution Assurance from IBM, we were able to justify the solution selection and investment to the business."

Thanks to the strength of the relationship between Computacenter and IBM, the IT services and solutions provider was able to negotiate competitive commercials on Camelot's behalf. Alan Avery, Client Executive at IBM, comments: "IBM and Camelot have a longstanding relationship that dates back over 15 years. Working with a solutions partner such as Computacenter, who have in-depth knowledge of how both Camelot and IBM operate, was of paramount importance to the success of this project."

Working in partnership to reduce the risks of implementation

The IT partners joined forces to provide architectural design, configuration and installation services to the lottery operator. As Marc Fryer, Client Director at Computacenter, explains: "We collaborated with IBM to ensure that the solution was the best fit for the customer's needs. This collaboration continued throughout the implementation, which was delivered successfully using our industrialised best practice processes."

The new datacenter platform, which went live in January 2013, is based on IBM POWER7 servers, IBM BladeCentre System H chassis and IBM Storwize v7000 storage. It has been deployed across Camelot's primary and secondary datacenters, which operate on an active/active basis with equivalent hardware in each location.

Following the implementation, which was delivered on time and to budget, Camelot's internal IT team migrated its 50 SAP systems to the new infrastructure.

The new interactive gaming platform, which incorporates 150 virtual and physical devices, is currently in testing and development.

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Results:

Reducing costs and growing revenue

Camelot now has a reliable, flexible and future-proofed datacenter environment to support digital gaming channels as well as its critical financial systems.

"By working with Computacenter, we were able to ensure that the IBM solution would meet current and future needs, including growth in online channels," comments Mark. In addition to complying with Gambling Commission requirements, the new environment will enable Camelot to launch new services faster, as the modular architecture means it can add extra computing power without any downtime.

The new datacenter infrastructure has also enabled Camelot to:

Reduce costs: Less maintenance, easier management and lower warranty costs will all contribute to cost savings estimated at around £1 million over the next five years. The IBM solution also has lower power consumption and cooling requirements, and has enabled Camelot to free up a rack and a half of datacenter space. This drives down operating costs and enables the company to further its green agenda.

Increase efficiency: With enhanced IT performance, Camelot can now run job scheduling two and a half times faster than it previously could. It can also respond to player and retailer calls at its contact centre more rapidly, which improves customer service levels.

Embrace digital channels: Once live, the new interactive gaming platform will offer an improved customer experience, allowing Camelot to future-proof its online offering and deliver a first-rate service for its increasing number of players.

Mark concludes: "The datacenter environment will support our efforts to keep operating costs as low as possible, while enabling us to launch exciting new online games that increase revenue generation for National Lottery Good Causes."

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