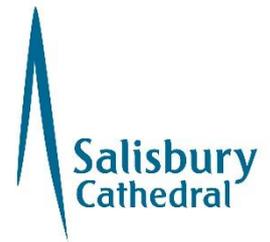# Iconic cathedral invests in Microsoft Cloud to support mobile working and accelerate growth

Salisbury Cathedral is one of England's finest medieval cathedrals. It attracts over 500,000 visitors each year, hosts many events, and is home to some of the world's oldest historical artefacts including one of the original copies of the Magna Carta from 1215. Salisbury Cathedral receives no subsidies, charges no entrance fees and has to be entirely self-sufficient through visitor donations and the support of a 600-strong volunteer group. Yet it is also required to operate to the same standards and regulations as private and public sector originations. To meet such special needs, Richard Gurd, Finance & IT Strategy Lead, has been implementing an exceptional 3 year plan to modernise and extend the IT environment with the very latest cutting-edge technology.

The Cathedral's Challenges

The IT infrastructure, based on Microsoft Small Business Server 2003, Windows Server 2003, old versions of Microsoft Office and Windows XP machines, was nearing end of life and unable to support the Cathedral's strategic direction. The employees were limited by slow machines and the challenge of working with different versions of software. Richard also had mounting fears about the security, resilience and management costs of the environment with 'end of support' scheduled for Windows Server 2003 in July 2015.

As a charity and donation-funded organisation, Salisbury Cathedral didn't have the luxury of rolling out a single all-encompassing IT refresh programme. Budget constraints meant that upgrades to the environment had to be taken in small, gradual phases but without causing further disruption.

"We were facing both immediate issues and the question of how to achieve longer term objectives. Our IT was pretty much 'tied up with string'. We needed a more robust approach that could bring us up-to-date with everyone working from the same versions. But with limited budget and accountability to donors, we had to find a way to achieve that in a nice gradual approach." Richard comments.

The Chosen Solution

Microsoft partner, GCC, conducted a strategic IT review and surprised Richard with a different approach to reduce cost, maximise resources and still provide the team with the most advanced IT tools available. Fast forward 2 years and Salisbury Cathedral now operates in the cloud with Office 365 for email and productivity applications, Windows Server 2012 R2 and 2 virtual servers for a SQL Server database and file storage. Everyone has modern Windows 7 computers and GCC provides a comprehensive support service for desktops, devices, network and servers which includes remote maintenance and helpdesk services.

For the first time, the Cathedral's staff are able to access their information from anywhere with secure, reliable cloud connectivity. Office 365 provides everyone with a generous email service and all the familiar Office applications like Word and Excel, whilst Lync has introduced new ways of keeping in touch and speeding up communication through instant messaging and presence features. Windows Server 2012 R2 underpins the environment with robust server capability and consistent information access for the users. Microsoft Intune completes the platform for cloud-based systems management.

Richard enthuses *"Getting everyone on a reliable platform has been key to improving staff efficiency and morale and being able to work from home has made a big difference. It's very comforting to know we'll automatically get upgrades that will keep us at the forefront too. GCC understood that we had quite special requirements and conducted an audit before they were even granted the contract. We trusted them; they delivered, and continue to deliver, on what they promised and more."*

"Microsoft cloud technologies have enabled us to move forward much quicker than planned and jump to new technology which we couldn't have afforded before. We can now all work easily from home and from pretty much any device. We have greater information security and a robust system that will underpin our future growth. Microsoft has made all that possible."

Richard Gurd
Finance & IT Strategy Lead,
Salisbury Cathedral

For more information, visit:
www.salisburycathedral.org.uk
www.gcc.co.uk

Main Benefits for Salisbury Cathedral

Secure and reliable platform

- Windows Server 2012 R2 and Office 365 combine to provide a secure cloud-based platform which is robust and flexible to accommodate Salisbury Cathedral's unique needs

- Remote systems access to Windows Server ensures that Salisbury Cathedral can be immediately responsive to any arising issues or early warning signals from any location

- Windows Server and Microsoft Intune provide powerful, up-to-the-minute status updates with easily digestible management information in dashboard views

- Support and management services from IT partner, GCC, provides additional security through regular patching and remote assistance without need for in-house resources

- Guaranteed future upgrades ensure Salisbury Cathedral will continue to work with the latest technologies without additional financial outlay or business disruption

Productivity everywhere

- With full systems access from any location, staff are now able to effectively work from home supporting individual working styles and a family-friendly approach

- As Office 365 is accessible across all operating systems, staff and management can continue to use their own tablets, home machines and portable devices with unhindered functionality

- With the team split across 3 onsite offices, Office 365 features like Presence and Shared Calendars help them to quickly see who is available and save time when booking meetings or trying to get quick answers

- Unrestricted email storage has enabled everyone to choose their own policy for email management and fully supports teams, like Marketing, who work with large files and experience high email volumes

Efficient growth

- The new IT environment provides the Cathedral with a robust, scalable platform to sustain and accelerate ongoing team and activity growth

- The flexible 'per user, per month' payment model gives the Cathedral complete control over how quickly they grow and how much they invest, with the potential to scale at ease

- Without the need for large upfront investment, Salisbury Cathedral have been able to adopt new technologies faster than they would have previously been able to which directly impacts growth

Richard's Favourite Features

"I really like the presence feature than runs through Outlook and Lync. It's so simple but very useful to quickly see who's available and who isn't. It saves me the time spent walking between offices unnecessarily, bothering people who are busy. And if need be I can immediately find someone else to get answers or resolutions quickly."

"This has brought us into the 21st century – there's no compatibility issues anymore or systems going down. I've no doubt that everyone is much happier!"

"The system is not only robust it helps us be very responsive. If there are early warning signals of a potential systems issue, we know immediately and we can get it resolved from any location. We just couldn't have done that before."

"Based on what we've experienced so far we're very keen to go to the next level, bringing on-board more features and functionality that will help us deliver against the Cathedral's strategic goals."

"2015 is going be a very exciting and busy year for us with lots of events around the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta. We can now confidently focus on those activities knowing everything is working perfectly."

Microsoft

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