



**Industry:**  
Web consultancy

**Application of the Cloud:**  
Scalability

“ We wanted the ability to provide more power and scale solutions quickly when we needed to. ”

[www.building-blocks.com](http://www.building-blocks.com)

**Profile:** Manchester-based design and technical consultancy delivering large-scale web projects.

## Overview

Building Blocks is expanding its portfolio of clients, working with them to improve their online presence. Many of those clients come to Building Blocks unaware of how big an impact the agency's expertise will have on web traffic and are reluctant to commit to a large spend on equipment before seeing evidence of the business need.

A private cloud solution from UKFast satisfied the needs of Building Blocks and its clients, offering a flexible and scalable solution that can grow and shrink as and when required. The reactive nature of the cloud means clients don't need to outlay a huge amount of money on equipment and servers to cope with expected demand before they know it's necessary.

## Situation

Building Blocks was founded in Manchester four years ago by Jonathan Whiteside and Andy Iddon as a niche technical agency. It has grown into a specialist consultancy delivering design and technical services for large-scale web projects for clients including Warner Leisure Hotels and Butlins in the UK and Yara International and Alitalia abroad.

In 2010 the firm opened an office in New York after enjoying a record third year in which foreign deals accounted for a fifth of the contracts won by the

web technology firm. It is now focused on expanding its 40-strong team at its Manchester headquarters to cater for ongoing relationships with its long-term clients and new business.

Building Blocks boasts a strong relationship with its clients; staying informed of their changing needs. Jonathan Whiteside, co-founder of Building Blocks, identified an

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"UKFast has a very good understanding of what a private cloud is. Additionally, we standardise on the Microsoft Stack at Building Blocks and the knowledge that UKFast has of Microsoft cloud-based solutions – particularly the newer ones – was

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increasingly common need amongst his clients for scalability and performance of their web solutions to cope with potential future growth.

Whiteside explains: "What they wanted was a strategy that allowed them to very easily grow and cost-effectively grow to cope with that demand."

## Solution

With his clients' needs of flexibility and scalability in mind, Whiteside looked to a cloud-based solution that he could recommend with confidence.

unrivalled. We couldn't find that with any other hosting provider. Their unique insight swayed it for us."

Opting for a private cloud, Whiteside had to consider the concerns often associated with a cloud environment.

He says: "The main concern is always around security – and particularly around data protection, customer data and how it is being stored. People think it can increase the chances of being hacked because it's not within the control of their in-house team.

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“UKFast understands our situation and that of our clients and how important it is to us that we deliver on our promises. From a customer service point, they’re excellent.”

“We’ve addressed those concerns by making sure we think about every possibility before we deploy the solution. How are we going to deploy the solution? How will we access the solution? We make sure things have secure, long passwords.”

He continues: “Having a cloud solution makes you think a lot more about security concerns than perhaps you would if you were running it in-house. With a cloud solution we are thinking longer and harder about how we can secure those solutions for our customers.”

Since adopting the solution in late 2010, Building Blocks hasn’t experienced any security problems. Whiteside says most clients hosted by Building Blocks haven’t noticed a change.

“There hasn’t been a visible difference. People can’t tell if it’s being hosted on a cloud platform or not, it just happens in the background.”

### Benefits

The benefits of a private cloud solution have been highlighted when clients have demanded more disc space or capacity and when clients have experienced high peaks in traffic.

“We’ve been able to scale up much more quickly and much more cost-effectively,” says Whiteside.

“We have been able to provision more space or more capacity quicker by going through a normal support procedure rather than having to justify a business case and how the new equipment is going to fit into the

architecture and discuss where we are going to put the servers.”

It’s also proven its worth for clients launching campaign-driven marketing that is susceptible to traffic spikes.

“Instead of having to outlay for the provision of new equipment and new servers when they know the campaign is only running for three months, they can scale up, pay for that particular amount of time, then scale back to their normal amounts.”

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