



Industry:
Web services

Application of the Cloud:
Consolidation

“ I’ve learned so much from UKFast that I don’t just see them as our hosting company anymore. ”

www.fathomgroup.co.uk

Profile: Fathom is a design, web and database agency that was established in 1999. The firm made two acquisitions in the past two years that have allowed it to extend and improve the services it offers to clients that include local SMEs, mid-sized PLCs, government agencies and multi-nationals.

Overview

Fathom's merger with fellow web design and hosting company, Ampheon (www.ampheon.co.uk), highlighted the potential benefits that a virtualised solution could offer in terms of consolidation, reduced costs and improved services for clients – allowing the firm to grow and become more competitive within a flexible hosting environment. Fathom has been disappointed by other hosting providers and chose UKFast because of the team's crucial technical expertise.

Situation

Specialising in design, web development and database development since its inception 13 years ago, Fathom has helped hundreds of businesses establish a presence in the online and offline world. In late 2010 the firm identified the opportunity to partner with other likeminded companies to facilitate fast growth and become more competitive by offering their clients more.

Malcolm Wright, commercial director at Fathom and founder of partner company, Ampheon, explains: "We were both looking for synergies that we could capitalise on and we identified areas where we could come together for the mutual benefit of both businesses and our clients."

Partnerships with Media Garden and Ampheon, formed in 2010 and 2011 respectively, brought together the hosting solutions of three parties and sparked discussions on how to consolidate them under one system.

Wright says: "Before the merger I was investigating the option of cloud technology because I saw it as the next logical place to go for our business. Our servers were three and four years old so nearing their end of life anyway and we needed a different way to manage them."

The privately-owned and managed virtualised hosting platform accommodates Fathom clients previously on dedicated servers as well as those with shared hosting. A successful migration process has allowed the business to continue to run as normal without clients noticing any negative change to their websites.

"The changeover has had no negative impact on our clients at all. It should mean that their hosting is more reliable and more responsive. It also means we can offer them a better range of server-based options."

“The technical expertise and support from UKFast has been spot on.”

"As a bigger business, we had economies of scale which meant merging environments in a virtualised hosting platform could bring our cost base down and improve on areas such as single points of failure."

Solution

UKFast delivered a cloud hosting solution that allowed Fathom to consolidate 15 servers previously hosted across four data centres into one virtualised environment.

Wright says the move to a cloud platform made the reliability of Fathom's provider all the more important.

He explains: "We knew we wanted to go down this road, it all came down to the reliability of the provider. We started using another provider for one off servers but we suffered a lot of downtime. We needed to know that wasn't going to happen."

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“It’s critical to choose the right provider and not make a decision purely based on cost. They need to be able to provide the right support for the platform.”

Wright agrees that trust of your supplier’s technical expertise is paramount when considering a cloud platform. “You are relying on technical expertise,” he says. “With other providers, when there was a problem, technically, they didn’t know what to do. The technical expertise and support from UKFast has been spot on.”

Benefits

Fathom’s virtualised environment is living up to their hopes, giving the firm’s bosses peace of mind that their clients’ hosting will be more reliable than ever with a significantly reduced risk of downtime from hardware and software failures.

The firm is also confident that reboots necessary to install server patches will also take less time, meaning less scheduled downtime.

High-specification servers and web acceleration technology will deliver clients’ website pages faster, resulting in improved Google and Bing rankings that are influenced by web page speeds.

Fathom’s new environment will also allow the firm to introduce a number of new services to its clients over the coming months including a web hosting control panel so clients can manage their own websites as well as detailed management and monitoring of sites.

Fathom has invested in cloud hosting technology to become more competitive and to allow for fast growth.

Wright says: “The cloud environment is consolidating servers, giving us flexibility on the resources on a server so we can increase them or reduce

them as and when need to. And it’s much quicker which allows us to offer more services to our clients. It also gives us a much more stable platform because it’s not hardware-dependent. If we lose a disc in the server it doesn’t mean we have to down the server and rebuild it or anything like that – it just doesn’t happen.”

Wright recommends that other companies considering a move to the cloud, spend time researching different providers and choose a partner with the right level of essential technical expertise.

“It’s critical to choose the right provider and not make a decision purely based on cost. They need to be able to provide the right support for the platform.”

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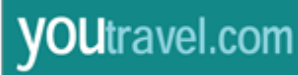
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