

SUCCESS STORY

Charon provides cost-effective solution for Wellington City Council's VAX and Alpha systems



The Challenge

Most of Wellington City Council's IT system ran in a modern Windows environment except for rate payments, an important customer-facing service, which relied on 20-year-old VAX and Alpha systems that were reaching the end of their useful lives.

As the economic downturn had forced cuts to the city budget, the council's IT department was keen to avoid the cost of rewriting the software applications running on the original systems when transferring these functions, as well as a large quantity of related data, to a new Windows environment.

The challenge was to find a low-cost, highly efficient solution to upgrade the aging legacy hardware. The system also needed a new level of back-up security to protect sensitive ratepayer data and financial records. The goal was to link the functions fulfilled by the legacy system to a new HP EVA SAN and enable data replication to a modern disaster-recovery site.

The Solution

After evaluating all available options, Rob Buxton, Wellington City Council system architect, selected Stromasys's CHARON-AXP and CHARON-VAX cross-platform virtualization software, supplied by United Business Solutions (UBS).

The decision was based on the fact that Charon software is the leading solution capable of creating an exact replication of the legacy VAX and AXP systems. Another important reason for choosing to work with UBS was that the IT department had the necessary knowhow to install the CHARON-AXP and CHARON-VAX software and could thus save money by managing the migration itself.



PARTNER PROFILE

United Business Solutions (UBS) is a privately owned Australian company focused on meeting the IT needs of companies and government bodies. UBS is Australia's foremost virtual VAX migration specialist and is accredited by Stromasys to supply the CHARON-VAX virtual system.

In addition to system migration, UBS also provides a full range of IT services, including access solutions, servers, storage, backup, recovery, archiving, security, intelligent detection systems, applications, networking, and operational management services. For more information, please visit:

www.ubsolutions.com.au



CUSTOMER PROFILE

Wellington is New Zealand's capital, with a population of 180,000 and an area of 30,000 hectares. Wellington City Council's sophisticated IT system is one of the most advanced in New Zealand. It not only ensures the smooth running of the city and its key departments, such as health services, community services and building approvals, but also delivers an impressive array of online services for ratepayers, which includes e-petitions and do-it-yourself property searches.





“Fortunately, installation is relatively straightforward and trouble-free, and any minor compatibility problems with the legacy system that may arise can usually be dealt with very quickly and easily,” said Lang, who has successfully completed more than 120 Charon migrations in Australia and New Zealand.

A further factor influencing Buxton’s decision to manage the Charon installation in-house was the fact that a reasonable time frame had been set for the project. This allowed him to schedule staff to install and test the software over several weeks, without placing unnecessary strain on the IT department’s normal operations. Once everything was in place, the actual migration took only three hours on a Sunday.

“The important thing for us,” says Rob Buxton, “is that we were able to draw on as much help and advice from UBS as necessary, without incurring the cost of on-site service. They were always available at the other end of the phone, and this was all the help we needed.”

The Result

Wellington City Council’s legacy software application has been successfully transferred to a modern Windows environment and is now running on a new HP server that delivers measurable savings in rack space, energy consumption, cooling costs, and carbon footprint.

The new system successfully emulates the legacy system without any changes to the application, user interface, data, and command files. The Council’s customer-facing and data entry personnel had no problem switching to the new system. It also provided a new level of backup security through an effective linkage to a modern HP EVA SAN, which allows data replication to a modern disaster-recovery site, thereby protecting confidential ratepayer data and sensitive financial records.

About Stromasys

Stromasys is the original and leading provider of enterprise-class cross-platform virtualization solutions, including PDP-11, Digital VAX and Alpha, HP 3000, and SPARC servers. The company extends the life cycle of business and mission-critical systems through virtualization, modernization, and system enhancement.

Founded in 1998 and headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, and in Boston, Massachusetts, with sales offices as well as engineering, development, and research labs located around the world, Stromasys has implemented more than 5,000 cross-platform virtualization solutions for the world’s leading companies in over 50 countries.

« *The Charon solution worked exactly as it said it would. UBS gave us the level of backup that made it practical for us to do the installation ourselves, and they were always available on the phone when we needed them.* »

Rob Buxton,
System architect,
Wellington City Council

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