

Case Study

whitbybird

Mission Critical

Peripheral benefits rarely become mission critical, but as *John Isitt* discovered, that is exactly what happened when whitbybird plugged in Cryoserver.

"Really it's a fringe benefit that we didn't expect from Cryoserver," says Charlie Tonkiss, whitbybird's IT Manager.

"We bought Cryoserver from much more of a compliance point of view and then suddenly discovered we could change the way we work through the use of Cryoserver."

Whitbybird is a fast growing engineering company whose cornucopia of awards present them with a major dusting challenge. Last year alone they won 30, although their website modestly only lists 19.

Like all British companies, whitbybird has had to move fast to keep abreast of and compliant with the new and changing regulatory environment, including the Data Protection Act, Freedom of Information Act and the Human Rights Act.

Part of their response has been to turn to Cryoserver, the Forensic Compliance System that makes an audit copy of every email sent to, from and around an organisation in

real time. The emails are stored in a secure, encrypted environment and can be retrieved incredibly quickly.

Whitbybird soon discovered that as well as helping them achieve regulatory compliance, Cryoserver has also helped them with their internal business practices, supported their drive for efficiency, improved customer service and improved their bottom line.

"Cryoserver is going to revolutionise the way we are going to work."

"We retain everything for 16 years because questions can arise long after completion of the project."

Taming the paper monster

Whitbybird is responsible for a host of high profile structures, including bridges, embassies, schools and the like throughout the world. Partly because of their design and engineering flair they have grown year on year at a prodigious rate. Forecasts for 2005 predict 30 percent growth in the UK.

Matching their engineering flair is whitbybird's attention to detail, rigorous quality procedures and a bullet proof audit trail of discussions, agreements and contracts.

"My main concern is that we retain evidence," explains Andrew Thorp, whitbybird's bright eyed and shrewd company secretary.

"We retain everything for 16 years because questions can arise long after completion of the project. We need to keep everything securely, which is why we've always had to print things out."

This means every single piece of communication, including emails, is currently printed, recorded, filed meticulously and then securely stored for a decade and a half. With over 300 staff in six offices throughout the UK and one in Dubai the paper trail takes on monster proportions.

Then came along Cryoserver and now working practices are set to be radically overhauled.

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Isao Matsumoto, whitbybird's Business Analyst, explains that with Cryoserver the company is now planning to stop producing and storing hard copies of emails. All emails – with their corresponding attachments – sent or received by whitbybird will be compressed and stored securely on Cryoserver.

"We looked at [Cryoserver] for compliance," explains Thorp.

"But in fact the main justification was that we could eliminate having to file and print out emails. The cost of that meant that we got the compliance things thrown in for nothing. It was the fringe benefits that justified it."

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Cascading Benefits

Whitbybird is now moving to a project based email system where every individual project will have its own unique email address. Combining the project based email with Cryoserver's storage, search and retrieval capabilities and, for the first time, email filing will fully integrate with their other document management systems.

"We had a good system in place for filing electronic documents we were creating," says Tonkiss, whitbybird's IT manager. "The big problem is that 50 percent of project documents [are] coming in on emails. We were



missing half of the documents. [Cryoserver] is going to revolutionise the way we are going to work."



"When we don't have to store [emails] any more we're going to save an enormous amount of storage space – a big saving," adds Thorp, thinking about his 16-year data storage headache.

Another fringe benefit is that whitbybird believes the move to a paperless email storage and archiving system is just one more thing to make them more attractive to potential recruits; in particular university graduates – the generation that finds paper filing alien and uncomfortable.

"If we're able to show them that they don't need to do as much paper work," believes Tonkiss. "Then we'll be able to attract a better set of graduates."

Another issue taken seriously by whitbybird is its corporate social responsibility. As part of its broader commitment it has signed up to ISO 14001 – the internationally recognised standard on environmental management.

Again Cryoserver is playing an unexpectedly substantial role in helping the engineers meet their green credentials. As Miranda Cooke, whitbybird's HR strategic manager explains, "Reducing paper consumption is quite significant for that."

Thorp points out that although environmental targets may be voluntary for the time being, they are likely to become mandatory at some point of the future. By setting the

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standards now, Thorp acknowledges that it puts whitbybird ahead of the game

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Archive Idol

The decision to buy Cryoserver was approached with all the usual diligence that whitbybird takes with any project.

Tonkiss explains: “I knew that compliance was becoming an issue and, even with project filing, we had a hole when it came to email archiving.

“Then, when I saw it I knew it could cover both angles, [but]we didn’t just look at Cryoserver,” says Tonkiss. “We also looked at two rival products. One we dismissed quite early – I think it was EAS – and the other one was KVS.” At that point

Tonkiss got KVS to demonstrate their product head to head with Cryoserver.

“What we discovered was that KVS didn’t do what we needed,” says Tonkiss. Part of the problem was that KVS does not have the forensic capability that Cryoserver offers.

Tonkiss continued, “What we wanted was something very simple that would require minimum user training, minimum administrative training and was reliable and could do the job. That was what Cryoserver offered us.”

Cryoserver has been quietly running in whitbybird for six months now. “It integrates so easily, no one notices it is there,” adds Matsumoto. Until, that is, it is needed and then, as Tonkiss, has discovered, Cryoserver really comes into its own.

“One quite senior member of staff deleted all his emails,” recounts Tonkiss. “He came to me and said, ‘What am I going to do? I’m going to a meeting in half an hour and I need to have this email back.’”

Tonkiss simply had the manager log in into his personal Cryoserver account from where he was able to access all his emails ever sent or received since Cryoserver has been in place. Within seconds he had found the relevant email.

Although whitbybird is rarely involved in litigation Matsumoto recognises that there is bound to be a disagreement in a project about who said what to whom and when. Then, with Cryoserver in place, Matsumoto knows that they will be able to pull up the all the relevant details – however long ago the email discussion took place – and have irrefutable proof whether something was said or not.

“In one sense that would justify the whole of Cryoserver,” says Matsumoto.

Thorp agrees. He is about to start filing whitbybird’s annual returns by email, pointing out wryly that not only



will he be able to do so for free – avoiding the usual £30 fee – he will also have proof, thanks to Cryoserver, that the returns have been sent and so avoid any fines or penalties for ‘lost’ returns.

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"The future of Cryoserver is important to us," adds Thorp. As for the future, as whitbybird moves to a paperless email system then, concludes Thorp, "It'll become mission critical".

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In a nutshell...

whitbybird

- Around 320 staff in six offices in the UK and one office in Dubai. An Edinburgh office is likely to follow shortly.
- Whitbybird sees itself as an egalitarian outfit, giving even junior staff early responsibility.
- Operating for just over 21 years.
- Operates in a range of engineering services including, structural, fire, bridges, community energy and special projects.
- Picked up 30 awards in 2004.

Cryoserver

- Complies with today's email retention requirements.
- Speeds up email investigations while increasing employees' privacy and confidentiality.
- Decreases liability and increases productivity by making users think twice before they press 'send'.
- Provides forensic evidence for court actions – reliable evidence.
- Preserves knowledge in the organisation in a secure, searchable repository.
- Delivers significant cost savings (e.g. users do not have to print out emails, fulfils Freedom of Information and Subject Access Re-

