

DMS product selection for City law firm, Simmons & Simmons

Advance7 was enlisted by Simmons & Simmons, an international City law firm with 20 offices and 2,000 people worldwide, to provide impartial evaluation of certain software products as part of the firm's broader IT upgrade. This upgrade entails a total rebuild of its IT infrastructure and includes a new global document management system, a new version of Microsoft Office, and Outlook and Exchange for email.

One driver to this IT upgrade, code named *Programme Vanilla*, is to meet specific needs created by Simmons & Simmons' international span and the globalisation of businesses more generally. This has caused a rapid rise in cross-border work where information and case documentation is required to be shared in multiple offices around the globe.

The Challenge

Simmons & Simmons' legacy Document Management System (DMS) did not allow simple sharing of documents around the world. It was also limited in that emails and other data types could not be stored in the DMS. Following a formal tender process, Simmons & Simmons enlisted the services of advance7 to assist in the evaluation of two leading products; one from Hummingbird and another from Interwoven.

The Solution

The evaluation was based on three broad criteria:

- Functional – would the DMS provide the facilities that Simmons & Simmons needs on a global basis?
- Performance – would the performance be acceptable at all offices across the globe?
- Load – how much load would each DMS network infrastructure put on the IT network and bandwidth capacity?

Simmons & Simmons set up two test environments – one for each DMS solution. In

each, three virtual offices were constructed; London, Hong Kong and Shanghai. London and Hong Kong were Data Centre locations, and Shanghai was the farthest flung office on a low speed link. This combination enabled measurement of client to server data flows and server to server replication traffic.

Advance7 supplied and configured WAN simulators to accurately recreate network delays and bandwidth constraints. Simmons & Simmons test users then assessed the functionality and performance of each system while Advance7 specialists controlled the test environment and made diagnostic measurements.

After 1 month, the test results distilled to provide three important pieces of information:

- Functional – each system had its strengths and weaknesses but one more closely matched the needs of Simmons & Simmons and therefore would deliver the greatest benefit to the firm.
- Performance – given the proposed configuration, one of the DMS solutions would not meet the response-time needs in Shanghai and other remote offices.
- Load – the additional network load and maximum tolerable latency was determined directly for the three virtual offices and extrapolated for the remaining 19 offices.

Ultimately, the information from the project enabled Simmons & Simmons to back up their own internal findings and select the correct DMS to meet their requirements based on solid evidence.

The Benefit

Paul Offord, Director of Advance7 comments, "Simmons & Simmons' proactive decision to assess the DMS products in a test environment ensured that they were able to make a sound business decision on which DMS would best fit their unique environment and user requirements. Case solved, verdict delivered, and all backed by

independent analysis and facts from our team of specialists.”

Abby Ewen, IT Director at Simmons & Simmons, said, “Provision of a robust, global DMS system is of critical importance to our business and enables the firm to provide its clients with cross-border advice on complex legal situations. However, the DMS does not stand alone, it impacts our network, bandwidth usage and a multiple of other IT

technologies employed at the firm. With independent and robust test analysis of the available technologies in our specific test environment, Advance7 provided results and 100% impartial advice that gave us the indisputable proof we needed to make the right investment decision.”

Simmons & Simmons has selected Interwoven DMS system as its global repository.

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The Solution

Advance7 assisted Simmons and Simmons in the evaluation of two leading products; one from Hummingbird and another from Interwoven.

The Business Benefits

Simmons & Simmons’ proactive decision to assess the DMS products in a test environment ensured that they were able to make a sound business decision on which DMS would best fit their unique environment and user requirements.