



ELDERSLIE FINANCE ACHIEVES EFFICIENT WINDOWS INFRASTRUCTURE

Corporate Finance Company selects Vertebral

Elderslie Finance Corporation (Elderslie) operates throughout Australia as an independent supplier of corporate finance and operating lease requirements for large corporations, government bodies, educational institutions and small to medium businesses.

To improve its Windows domain IT infrastructure, Elderslie chose Vertebral Solutions (Vertebral) to upgrade existing Windows servers and software and provide ongoing 3rd level IT support for Microsoft products. The result is a streamlined Windows IT infrastructure that Elderslie's IT team can now manage internally, improved data recovery capabilities, faster access and tightened security.

"There is greater peace of mind for our IT support team and the business as a whole. Our new server and network set-up is stable, secure and reliable."

Maghdi Styer, IT Manager, Elderslie Finance

Elderslie sought to reduce business risk by upgrading servers

Elderslie's internal Windows domain and Microsoft mail server was running on unsupported and outdated hardware and software. This had direct implications for the company's ability to recover these systems in the event of a disaster.

Elderslie's IT Manager, Maghdi Styer comments, "If there was a Windows domain system failure it could have taken us a couple of days to recover because the hardware was unsupported and we would have had to rebuild the hardware and source new parts from scratch."

To upgrade its servers and operating systems to the latest technology, Elderslie began reviewing the market for a suitable outsourcing partner.

Vertebral's technical expertise and professionalism is key

Having worked with a number of different IT suppliers in the past, Elderslie wanted to establish a long-term relationship with a single company.

"We were looking for an experienced partner with breadth of expertise in the latest server technologies to complete the upgrades in a short timeframe. After shopping around, we chose Vertebral for its technical skills, service professionalism and flexible approach."

Maghdi Styer, IT Manager, Elderslie Finance

Maghdi continues, "Vertebral's specialist Microsoft expertise also marked them as the best fit to help us achieve our goals."

Audit pinpoints areas for improvement

Vertebral's extensive review of Elderslie's existing IT environment confirmed potential to improve its disaster recovery capacity and identified multiple efficiency improvements to be gained by upgrading the existing Windows server and software environment.

Vertebral delivered the following services to Elderslie:

- Replaced critical Windows server hardware with the latest IBM X series servers
- Upgraded internal network operating system to Windows Server 2003
- Upgraded the messaging platform to Exchange Server 2003



VERTEBRAL

The backbone to a reliable network

Seamless upgrades without disrupting business

Vertebral upgraded Elderslie's critical Windows server hardware whilst taking care to preserve previous domain information such as user accounts and group memberships to minimise disruption to the business. To achieve this, the Vertebral team built an interim server and copied critical data across so it could easily be transferred and configured in the new environment.

Maghdi comments, "The new technology was installed and users were up and running over a single weekend. The entire project took just over a week to complete."

"There has been no disruption to business and no additional staff training required because the user interface and applications stayed the same. The transition was excellent, our staff weren't aware that we were on the new platform until we told them!"

Maghdi Styer, IT Manager, Elderslie Finance

Single directory console creates more manageable IT environment

Vertebral brought all the information and data from Elderslie's decommissioned servers together into one server running Windows 2003 Active Directory and Exchange Server 2003.

Maghdi comments, "Previously, we had to use three different systems to make individual changes to user mail access or folder permissions. Now we can do everything through a single Active Directory console which has made our systems administration easier and more efficient."

Improved remote web access

In addition to a more stable, secure server environment, Elderslie has also gained a number of other benefits from the upgrade, including improved remote access to the company intranet and web email interface for staff.

Maghdi explains, "Vertebral has given us better remote web and email access which has made life easier for our team and allowed us to provide more flexible working conditions to improve staff productivity."

The benefits to Elderslie include:

- Stable, scalable network infrastructure
- Improved disaster recovery capabilities
- Greater security via exchange front-end server
- Single directory console to manage user accounts
- Easier, more manageable IT environment
- Improved remote email access
- Ability to easily integrate other business applications into Windows network

Taking the extra step to ensure a smooth transition

A specific challenge which arose in implementation was that Elderslie's Outlook client did not automatically update to the new server as expected. Rather than simply updating the information automatically using a script, the Vertebral team logged onto each machine individually and updated the information manually to ensure it worked correctly on every PC.

Maghdi comments, "Vertebral took the 'extra step' by completing testing on the spot to ensure a seamless transition to the new server environment. They also completed the manual configuration after hours so it didn't affect our business operations."

Vertebral up-skills Elderslie's internal IT team

"Vertebral has trained and mentored our IT team, increasing their skills and knowledge in implementing, managing and maintaining the new server environment."

Maghdi Styer, IT Manager, Elderslie Finance

"We will continue to look to Vertebral for consultancy, ongoing maintenance and support as needed but we are confident we can manage the network and fix things ourselves moving forward, thanks to the skills transferred to us from the Vertebral team."