Business challenge

In the cloud services market, competition is fierce and customer demand for high service quality that does not break the bank is growing. How could Claranet deliver on these expectations?

Transformation

Companies choose private and hybrid cloud services providers over their public cloud competitors for better data security and personalized support—but want this at increasingly low prices. Claranet drives down internal costs with reliable IBM® Storage solutions, which help keep customer data—the most important enterprise asset—ultra-secure.

Business benefits

Increases
internal operational efficiency facilitating more competitive pricing

Fulfills
varied customer needs, with flexible, scalable infrastructure

Offers
non-stop reliability and security for data-driven, privacy-conscious industries

Claranet

Delighting business customers with first-rate private and hybrid cloud services

Founded in 1996, Claranet is one of Europe's leading managed IT services providers. It offers businesses hosting, networks, and communications services. Claranet has over 6,500 customers and an outstanding record for delivering high quality solutions, across a wide range of industries. With over 1,800 employees, it has 24 offices and 58 data centers across Europe and South America.

"IBM Storage enables us to drive down our internal costs, giving us savings that we can pass onto our clients in the form of competitive prices."

—Gilles Gatineau, Core Infrastructure Architect for Systems and Storage, Claranet

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Meeting great expectations

As prices drop, public cloud services have become increasingly alluring. But many companies are still looking to private and hybrid cloud providers instead, due to the greater confidence in data security and tailored services they can offer. To continue to compete, non-public cloud providers must differentiate themselves without letting the price gap grow too large.

Gilles Gatineau, Core Infrastructure Architect for Systems and Storage at Claranet, picks up the story: "We can offer better SLAs [service level agreements] and more of a human dimension than public cloud service providers—comparing our solutions to our public competitors is like comparing an enterprise workstation with a PC that you pick up at a supermarket. Also, we keep all data within France, which is especially

important to clients within the healthcare industry. Regardless of these differentiators, customers from every industry still compare our prices with those of public cloud service providers, putting downward pressure on our fees."

For all cloud services providers, infrastructure is a key component of success. Flexibility, scalability, and reliability are all crucial selection criteria.

"Technology decisions play a big role in helping us to serve our existing clients, and to attract new ones,"

explains Gilles Gatineau. "As the data our clients generate and store rocketed, we outgrew our previous storage platform. We began experiencing issues with availability and, although these problems never affected our customers, we were spending too much time administering to the systems when they failed. It was also difficult for us to make changes to the infrastructure, raising the risk that we would be slow to respond to a client request. We decided it was time for a refresh, and began looking at the options available."

Laying strong foundations

To support its hybrid and private cloud services, Claranet deployed IBM Storage, IBM Power Systems™ and software-defined storage infrastructure. Specifically, the company rolled out IBM Storwize® V7000, managed with IBM Spectrum Virtualize™ and backed up using IBM Spectrum Protect™.

"IBM Power Systems has long been our server platform of choice, so moving to IBM storage made perfect sense," comments Gilles Gatineau. "First, we implemented Storwize V7000 to support our IBM i on Power Systems environment. Soon after, we introduced IBM Spectrum Virtualize, which allows us to manage both Storwize V7000 and legacy storage systems using a single point of control. Using Spectrum Protect, we can easily back up data from across our entire environment. With IBM, we gained more mature software-defined storage technology, which is better suited to enterprise requirements."

For its healthcare-specific service offering, Claranet implemented all-flash IBM FlashSystem® V9000.

"We added IBM FlashSystem V9000 for our healthcare clients, building an isolated environment that helps us to keep personal health data ultra-secure," elaborates Gilles Gatineau. "In this landscape, all data is hot, so we must be able to provide very rapid access at any time. Previously, our healthcare clients relied on internal storage within IBM Power Systems servers, which offers extremely high performance because you do not have to contend with network latency. FlashSystem is one of the only options that could give us comparable performance for external storage. In addition, choosing a solid-state solution rather than spinning disks significantly reduces the energy requirements."

Standing out from the crowd

By harnessing IBM Storage solutions, Claranet has boosted efficiency via simplified management. Saving time and effort on internal operations helps the company preserve its margins.

"We can survive a minor outage, but losing data would be catastrophic; with reliable IBM technology on our side and the extra safety net provided by IBM Spectrum Protect, we don't have to worry about either."

—Gilles Gatineau, Core Infrastructure Architect for Systems and Storage, Claranet

"Spectrum Virtualize gives us a powerful management tool we can use for our entire storage environment—including some non-IBM, legacy systems," says Gilles Gatineau. "We also benefit from the same interface across all IBM Storage solutions. IBM Storage enables us to drive down our internal costs, giving us savings that we can pass onto our clients in the form of competitive prices. In the increasingly crowded cloud services marketplace, this is a key advantage."

Claranet can use the time it saves on management to focus on delivering excellent service to customers, confident that the flexibility of its storage platform can support high responsiveness.

"With software-defined storage from IBM, we can dynamically adjust capacity across our different storage systems, helping us react fast when a new client request comes in," adds Gilles Gatineau. "It is easy to scale up the environment, ensuring we are prepared for sudden data growth. And even our most security-conscious clients can be confident that their data is protected on IBM Storage."

All of Claranet's customers expect services to be available whenever they need them, but for the company's healthcare clients, this is an absolute priority.

Gilles Gatineau concludes: "Since we deployed the IBM Storage solutions, we have never had a crash that interrupted service to customers or, more importantly, caused data loss. We can survive a minor outage, but losing data would be catastrophic; with reliable IBM technology on our side and the extra safety net provided by IBM Spectrum Protect, we don't have to worry about either. Now that we have the solid foundations of IBM Storage in place, we are positive that we're ready to meet a whole range of client needs."

Solution components

- IBM® FlashSystem® V9000
- IBM Power Systems™
- IBM Spectrum Protect™
- IBM Spectrum Virtualize™
- IBM Storwize® V7000
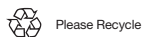
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Take the next step

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