

TECHNOLOGY FOUNDATION SECURELY DELIVERS INFORMATION ASSETS OF LEGAL SERVICES FIRM



Harmans Lawyers

Harmans Lawyers is a leading South Island legal services firm with a long and proud history that dates back to 1888. During this time they have built a reputation for providing effective outcomes to a discerning client base via the diversity of their solution offerings and exceptional legal expertise.

Over the years as Harmans range of services have grown, the engagement processes entered into with their clients has been developed to suit the specific requirements of the client and project. Across New Zealand from corporate boardrooms to building sites, farm blocks to rest homes, Harmans operate in an environment where agility is key, and business is no longer done only from a traditional legal office environment.

The requirement to work with clients irrespective of their geographical location, and have access to the right information assets at the right time has required the innovative use of technology to keep Harmans out in front of the competition. Since 2004, Harmans has been working with Datasouth to advise, design, and maintain their information asset systems to ensure they continue to deliver effective client outcomes.

Datasouth is an Information Technology Partner to innovative and leading businesses throughout New Zealand and Australia.

We understand Business Intelligence, Software Development, Network Infrastructure and total System Design and Support.

Through working with Datasouth, you are employing an Information Technology partner substantial enough to undertake any technology engagement.

We appreciate that the partnership with our clients is what matters, and realising the potential of this relationship enables us to understand your requirements to deliver effective business outcomes.

Laying the foundations

Harmans operate in an industry environment where information is the key to success. As a legal service provider, Harmans are continuously dealing with privileged information that needs to be appropriately protected and secured, while at the same time dynamically available to authorised users' no matter their location.

To meet these requirements, Windows Server 2008 was deployed as the foundation of Harmans information asset systems. The deployment of Windows Server 2008 provided the opportunity to increase system reliability, availability, and security.

It also provided the ability to implement multiple virtual server environments onto single physical server assets, maximising server resource utilisation, consolidating physical hardware assets, resulting in reduced hardware investment levels. The utilisation of server virtualisation allowed for the deployment of a disaster recovery strategy, including the replication of domain controller functionality and core information assets to secondary virtual environments, using core technologies built within Windows Server 2008.

"The utilisation of virtualisation for the replication of key functions and assets has provided a business continuity management solution which was previously cost prohibitive. This solution has given us the confidence that our systems and information assets will be available when required." – Alan Pollard, Harmans Lawyers Chief Executive Officer.

Harmans also identified that email was a core application which must always be available. The deployment of Exchange Server 2007 provided this opportunity with built-in replication technologies that provided system redundancy in the architecture and database design.

Securing critical information assets

The securitisation of information assets is controlled by a multi-tier Identity and Access Management approach, providing controlled access to information based on user permission levels. In addition controls are in place to ensure that information assets are not lost or compromised due to data leaks or theft.

The integrity of the network and its associated resources is maintained by a multi-faceted approach to perimeter security, antivirus protection, and system updates. A multi-tier policy managed firewall solution is in place at both the perimeter and device levels, while multiple email filters are deployed at the email gateway. A multi-vendor managed antivirus solution is deployed at each entry point of the network with signature updates automatically pushed out to all system devices, while all system updates being centrally managed are automatically pushed to required devices.

The requirement for users to work away from the traditional office environment required a simple and secure method for the delivery of applications and information assets. This has been achieved by the deployment of Microsoft's Terminal Services Gateway which provides users with a SSL virtual private network (VPN) and the publication of applications via Terminal Services. The solution

was designed to provide a zero touch to users' devices, providing a very simple but secure remote access solution to all users no matter their IT literacy.

"In today's electronic age the requirement to ensure the integrity of our information assets has never been higher. We need to have assurance that these assets are appropriately secured and not vulnerable to loss or corruption. The solution developed by Datasouth has provided us with dynamic access to these assets as required, but ensuring that our information does not end up in the wrong hands." – Alan Pollard.

Letting technology improve business productivity

A core component of Harmans culture is the philosophy of work smarter not harder. As such their use of technology needed to support this philosophy and allow them to focus on the job at hand rather than the technology used.

A standard operating environment (SOE) is deployed to all desktop devices, providing a streamlined process for the centralised deployment and management of the desktop operating environment. Application deployment and management is also managed centrally providing a zero touch solution to the users' device.

In addition the network is centrally monitored, providing real-time diagnostics of the networks health. In the situation of an event an automated resolution process is undertaken. Should this not be successful, the alert is sent to the Datasouth Service Desk for further investigation.

Finally, organisation collaboration and communication has been enhanced by the deployment of a company wide intranet portal utilising Windows SharePoint Services.

"Our philosophy to work smarter not harder has encouraged us to look for new alternatives and opportunities in our use of technology. With Windows SharePoint Services being included with Windows Server 2008, it made sense that we investigated the opportunities that this technology could provide in our system processes and business productivity. The ability to streamline our deployment processes and proactively manage the health of our network has also provided real business benefits in our business productivity and reduced our total cost of ownership." – Alan Pollard.

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