

Sky High Availability



Airbus

Airbus is one of the world's leading aircraft manufacturers. Airbus designs, builds, sells and supports the most modern and comprehensive family of aircraft in the world, setting new standards that shape the future of the airline industry. They consistently capture around 50 per cent more of all orders for airliners with more than 100 seats.

Airbus employs 57,000 people and produces a comprehensive range of commercial aircraft renowned for their efficiency, innovation, economy and safety. It has captured the imagination of the world with the A380 - the biggest airliner ever built - which is setting new standards for the aviation industry.

Airbus facilities and personnel are situated in the major airline market areas around the globe, creating an efficient, proactive network for the production and support of its highly successful airliner product line. With training and customer support centres in France, USA and China; onsite support from 29 managers and 160 field officers; and 1,500 suppliers in 30 countries, Airbus relies on the speed, resilience and security of its IT networks to ensure they deliver the best quality of service to their customers and suppliers.

The challenges

Operating four websites worldwide and dynamic sub-sites for special products or events, Airbus needed a reliable partner to build and manage a tailored hosting service to meet its unique online needs. The Airbus websites need to be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They have to be resilient and able to withstand great surges in web traffic. Airbus also needs to update all its websites in real time. Due to the sensitive nature of the aeronautic industry, Airbus's technical partners have to be highly reliable, expert and available at all times. This means going beyond the basic requirements of the contract to ensure all parts of the site are online and working at all times.

The high technical and service demands of the project led Airbus to turn to Claranet, the trusted technical partner for national and international businesses.

The solution

Airbus outsourced the hosting and the management of its websites to Claranet. Claranet worked closely with Airbus to understand its IT requirements before designing, implementing and managing a tailored hosting platform based on three primary elements: improved infrastructure redundancy; dedicated data storage, access and back-up systems; and the ability to update content in real time.

To update content in real time, Claranet adapted the platform to be compliant with a worldwide cache solution. The Airbus websites are updated using a tailored Content Management System (CMS). This includes a synchronisation system which Claranet developed to store website edits and updates before they are published.

A key advantage of the managed hosting platform is a 'pre-production' platform, which makes it possible to change and edit the websites with no risk of unavailability.



A Technical Account Manager was provided as a main point of contact throughout the project. This personalised management enabled Airbus and Claranet to work closely together during the design, implementation and ongoing management of the hosting solution. The solution is managed by a team of expert project managers who are ITIL certified (Information Technology Infrastructure Library) - the world's most respected qualification in the delivery of high quality IT services.

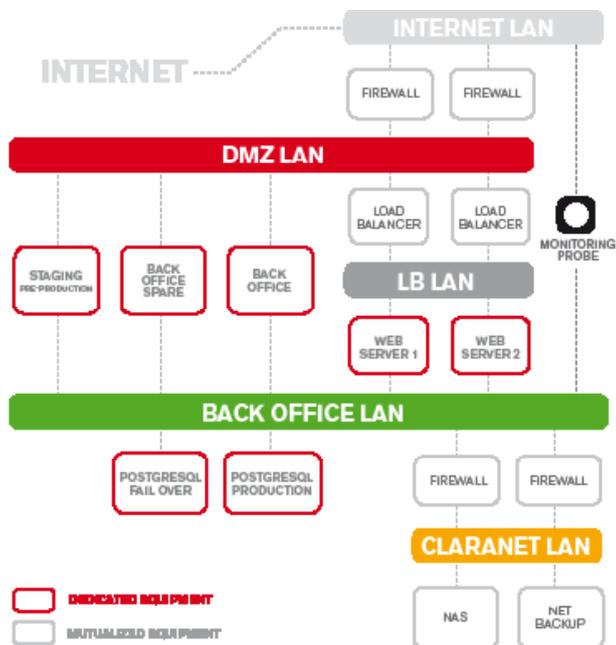
Claranet manages the technical framework that Airbus's applications use. Any application or service the customer needs can be implemented as long as it is supported by Claranet's underlying framework or infrastructure. This gives Airbus access to a wide variety of technologies, including Microsoft Windows, Oracle and IBM Websphere.

The managed hosting platform uses two technical platforms – the v3 and v4.

The v3 is composed of four servers under Windows Server 2000. It uses an asp and asp.net scripting layer to enable the creation of web applications and uses Claranet's SQL Server 2000 platform. The v3 platform also the Airbus websites in China and Japan, and a special sub-site to exhibit Airbus' newly launched Airbus A380 - the world's largest passenger airliner.

The v4 platform is composed of seven servers under the Linux Debian operating system. It's a Java platform which uses a PostgreSQL database. The v4 platform hosts the corporate Airbus website and the Airbus website in North America.

To deliver a better infrastructure redundancy, the hosting platform is based on two state-of-the-art data-centres, featuring the latest in security, cooling, load balancing and energy technologies to provide the most reliable service possible.



Dedicated data storage and centralised data access is provided through a NAS (Network Attached Storage) system. NAS enables Airbus to share storage between the back office, the pre-production platform and the front office. This means Claranet can quickly add a new server if needed, as there is no need to copy the website data across.

A data backup system safeguards Airbus's business data, and a firewall is deployed as part of a security policy to defend the website from online threats and attacks.

The result

Claranet's technical framework supports the most appropriate applications to meet Airbus's unique online needs. The principle benefit of the solution is that the Airbus website is available without interruption. The applications are redundant and supported by Claranet's Technical Account Manager.

On the day of the Airbus A380's first public appearance, the website received more than 600,000 unique visitors. A further 750,000 visitors flocked to the website on the day of the super jumbo jet's maiden flight. The platform was designed to withstand such dramatic peaks in traffic. The solid and reliable technical framework was closely managed by a Technical Account Manager to ensure there was no degradation in customer experience. Despite this dramatic peak in web traffic, visitors to the Airbus website didn't experience any unavailability.

"The close working relationship we have with our Technical Account Manager has helped foster a good relationship with our other web partners and create the feeling of a 'virtual web team' around airbus.com."

Airbus's Internet Manager said, "We have been working with Claranet and with our Technical Account Manager for several years now. We have developed a good working relationship, with mutual trust and understanding. Our Technical Account Manager not only acts as the first point of contact on technical issues, his support often goes beyond technical assistance by advising us on various projects. The support staff and account management team have been helpful and responsive - even in the middle of the night. The pro-active monitoring of the server has proved very valuable, allowing us to troubleshoot any problems.

For further information, please visit :

www.airbus.com
www.clara.net