

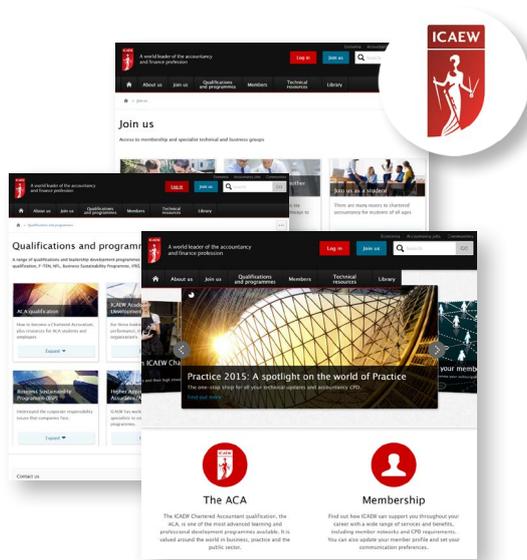


Claranet enables ICAEW to quickly respond to web traffic

ICAEW

ICAEW is a world leading professional member organisation that promotes, develops and supports over 144,000 chartered accountants worldwide. Its ACA qualification to train chartered accountants is respected and valued worldwide.

Much of ICAEW's engagement with its members and students is done online. Its digital channels are therefore vital, enabling ICAEW to reach out to their customers. Given how important its online presence is, ICAEW called upon Claranet to re-architect their website with Claranet's scalable Managed Hosting solution.



The challenge

ICAEW engages with their students and members at each stage of their careers. ICAEW trains, supports and guides them in their careers with the aim of enabling them to grow and advise businesses. This relies upon a dependable online infrastructure that can handle high peak-time traffic. Before Claranet, the ICAEW's infrastructure was not always able to handle this workload.

ICAEW's need for a robust online service became clear five times a year when they released the ACA exam results. These results are posted on the site for students to view. At the time of release ICAEW's site sees a large spike in traffic, with up to 5,000 students trying to access their accounts to view their results at once.

As Bill Wilson at ICAEW explains, this caused significant problems: "Our site used to find it very strenuous to handle traffic spikes around the time of ACA results. Eager students would repeatedly hit the refresh button to load their grades, which created up to 500 times the access requests than were made in non-peak times. With up to 150,000 potential users for the site at any one time, we wanted to provide a service where our students could get their results and get on with making decisions on the next steps of their careers. A flexible and reliable infrastructure solution was needed in order to meet our users' demands."



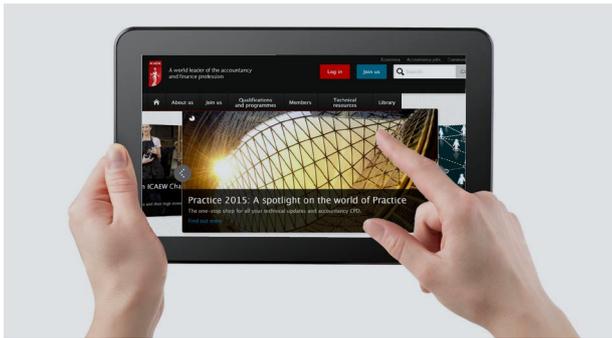
Key services:

- Managed Hosting
- Corporate Website Hosting
- Web Acceleration and DoS Protection

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The solution

“With these problems at the front of our minds, we turned to Claranet’s Managed Hosting solution. We sought a flexible infrastructure that could adapt to fluctuating demand for the site, as well as improve our ability to communicate with our chartered accountant members.”



Claranet’s Managed Hosting solution supports the site in times of increased traffic and ensures smooth and consistent operations. With a fully virtualised solution at ICAEW’s front end, the solution is able to increase the level of server support depending on user demand at any given period. When ICAEW needs a robust online solution to handle high levels of traffic, Claranet’s scalable service enables the organisation to deal with these instances. Additionally Claranet supplies ICAEW with their Web Acceleration and DoS Protection and Web Security platforms, and they are trialling Claranet’s Virtual Data Centre Cloud Hosting solution to support their development environments.

“The move to the cloud seems an inevitable step, as we become a more connected business.”

Bill Wilson, IT Director at ICAEW

The result

Claranet’s support of ICAEW’s site has resulted in a rock solid and flexible platform allowing the organisation to better support its members. In real terms it has had a significant impact on the activity of students searching for examination results and the user experience of other ICAEW members navigating the website.

As Bill Wilson explains: “Our solution with Claranet has given us the ability to monitor traffic for every server, raising or lowering their capacity depending on visitors to the site. Nowadays, the peak time for exam results is only a couple of minutes, with each student receiving their results quickly. This is really important for our students – for them, these results are able to make or break their future careers with a number of major firms. Once they receive their results, they are able to browse the site without difficulty.”

The future

ICAEW is continuing to draw their digital activities into sharper focus. This means a full replacement of their internal systems over the next few years, and will improve the way they communicate with their user base and the general public.

Bill Wilson concludes: “Given our productive relationship with Claranet, we are trialling their private cloud services as we consider a cloud-based environment. The move to the cloud seems an inevitable step, as we become a more connected business.”

For more information about Claranet’s services, and the benefits these deliver, go to: www.claranet.co.uk