



Highlight improves flexibility and efficiency with Claranet Azure migration

About Highlight

Highlight is a cloud-based network monitoring and reporting tool that enables IT Service Providers and their customers to better understand the real time and historic stability, load, and health of their IT services.

The platform is designed to quickly and efficiently display useful information, tailored for busy service desk, service manager, and relationship manager users, who are typically poorly serviced by traditional engineering focused tools.

Highlight collects a solid, continuous stream of data, in real time, from tens of thousands of devices worldwide, presenting clear information in a single pane of glass. This allows both service providers and their customers to instantly view what is happening across any network, from anywhere, and at any time. The data that Highlight collects is vital and extreme care is taken to minimise the possibility of data loss or corruption.

Given the company's emphasis on real-time visibility to its customers, it is important that Highlight is able to practise what it preaches in terms of having the back-end infrastructure to support its partner base. Speed, efficiency, consistent performance and data integrity are key, and their latest project was designed with these requirements very much in mind.

“ The very nature of our business requires us to be agile in everything that we do.”

The challenge

For several years, Highlight had been managing workloads using a private cloud platform. While this arrangement had reliably served Highlight's demanding partner base, the company now needed a more modern platform to fuel further growth.

One of the major challenges was to migrate onto the new platform with no loss of data and with no impact to their customers. Highlight processes an enormous amount of data including 3.3 million samples per hour from 150,000 watches and the key challenge was to complete the migration without losing any of those samples. Additionally, Highlight sends over half a million critical emails every month to over 8,000 customers in over 100 different countries.

As the demands of Highlight's customers continued to evolve, it became clear that the private cloud platform lacked the scalability and flexibility that was needed to meet these requirements. In the long term, this was threatening to constrain the company's long-term development, especially as it had plans to scale out its provision into multiple new partners and regions. The fact that Highlight's offering is software-as-a-service also meant that they needed to become more agile, with more frequent development cycles driving improvements in Highlight's performance.

The migration also provided them with an excellent opportunity to upgrade all their servers to the latest version of MS windows server and MSSQL.

Another challenge Highlight faced was that their legacy Disaster Recovery solution wasn't scalable, due to the growing requirements of their customers. They needed a solution to cope with existing demands and be flexible enough for any future requirements.



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Richard Thomas, Founder and CEO at Highlight, explains: "The very nature of our business requires us to be agile in everything that we do. Our legacy platform had served us well during the earlier phase of our development, but as the organisation grew, we were being tasked with managing a much broader portfolio of customers with a wider range of requirements. All this was placing a great deal of strain on our old platform and it became very clear we needed the flexibility to make platform changes in an agile and cost efficient way

"We quickly decided that overhauling our approach to cloud and achieving greater flexibility was essential to the future-proofing of our business, and would ensure that we could continue to provide the efficient service our customers expect."

“ The migration process was carried out over the course of a single month.”

The solution

Having a long-standing relationship with Claranet, Highlight called in the team to assess its future requirements.

Claranet conducted a detailed cost and assessment analysis of Highlight's previous infrastructure arrangement, to help decide on the best implementation for the company. After close consideration of the options, Claranet recommended a migration to a Microsoft Azure public cloud platform.

Part of this recommendation included the use of Azure Site Recovery as their DR solution, and now Highlight's critical data is replicated in real time across multiple Azure regions.

The migration process was carried out over the course of a single month, and was designed to help Highlight embrace a more flexible approach to data and application management, while reducing TCO and enable the company to quickly take on added capacity as and when required. As part of the main migration, Claranet supplemented Highlight's in-house IT expertise with project management services, DevOps guidance and best practice advice.

Richard Thomas added: "We already have strong internal IT knowledge at Highlight, but this was a project where we needed some extra guidance from a valued partner, and Claranet very much fit the bill in this respect. Our previous relationship with the company meant that we trusted their input, so it was clear to us once they finished their assessment that a migration to public cloud and Azure would be the best move for us."

“ Claranet demonstrated an ability to dovetail seamlessly with our IT team.”

The result

The migration process proved to be extremely smooth, with teams on both sides collaborating closely throughout the entire process. Thanks to this, Highlight has now decommissioned its legacy infrastructure, promising long-term cost savings and much improved performance and efficiency with the new Azure solution.

The success of this project and the strength of collaborative spirit between the two parties has also led to Highlight enlisting the assistance of Sec-1 (a Claranet Group company) to carry out penetration testing on Highlight and the new infrastructure. This will enhance the level of service Highlight is able to offer even further by ensuring its services are both secure and trustworthy.

Richard Thomas concluded: "As has been the case with our previous projects, working with Claranet was a trouble-free process, with our teams working very effectively in partnership with one another. We're now in a position where we're spending considerably less money on maintenance and upkeep, while being able to be agile in the face of increasingly diverse customer requirements.

"Throughout the process, Claranet demonstrated an ability to dovetail seamlessly with our IT team on both a technical and management level, providing the specific public cloud expertise that we required while respecting our wishes to manage things ourselves.

The migration itself was seamless and a major success factor was the fact that Highlight completed the migration during a standard maintenance window. There was no data loss and no impact to their customers, evidenced by no calls to their Support Desk about performance or data loss during or after the migration. Since the migration there has been a 20% improvement in performance.

"The fact that we're now working with Sec-1 on the security side is testament to the wider success of the project and the relationship we have with Claranet. We're looking forward to seeing the results of this next venture, and are also planning further work in partnership with Claranet in the near future."

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