



# WJEC WANTED HELP WITH IT INFRASTRUCTURE OVERHAUL AND VIRTUALISATION

When WJEC wanted a major IT infrastructure upgrade to enable its future ambitions, it chose Annodata as its provider. From Professional Services and major project delivery to hardware and software provision, the entire solution rests on a close and successful working partnership between WJEC and Annodata.

## IT INFRASTRUCTURE: THE FOUNDATION FOR AMBITIOUS PLANS

WJEC is a leading UK awarding body providing examinations throughout England and Wales. They provide assessment, professional development, educational resources and support for adults who wish to learn Welsh, plus, access to youth arts activities and a lot more. WJEC's qualifications include traditional GCSEs and A Levels, as well as Functional and Key/Essential Skills.

On top of traditional academic and work-related qualifications, WJEC offers the Welsh Baccalaureate at Foundation, Intermediate

and Advanced levels – and an innovative programme of study working with employers, community activities and individuals. Other resources include interactive online teachers' guides, textbooks, literature texts and other reading books for classroom use.

With ambitious plans to significantly develop its business – achieving growth rates far outstripping its current organic growth – WJEC sees a future-proof and flexible IT infrastructure as the foundation of its plans for the future. For that reason, in 2011 it embarked on a major infrastructure upgrade and expansion project for its main Cardiff and Treforest sites.



“Through a combination of Professional Services, project management, hardware and software provision, Annodata were able to deliver a ‘full-blown’ IT infrastructure for us – involving virtualisation, storage, back-up, disaster recovery, design and more.”

GARETH ROBERTS, SYSTEMS ENGINEER, WJEC



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## ENABLING BUSINESS GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

In his role as WJEC's CIO, John Cunliffe explains the rationale: "Our focus was on the future evolution and success of the organization. For that we needed to establish a stable and scalable virtual hosting platform on which to migrate existing systems, ensure adequate network and storage capacity, and make sure that current and future needs for business continuity, back-up and disaster recovery were catered for."

Cunliffe adds: "With our sights set on growth, we were concerned that our current network infrastructure gave us neither the scalability nor the resiliency required to support ongoing and future developments. With the significant developments planned, a solid IT infrastructure foundation needed to be put in place." WJEC's requirement was to migrate to VMware as a virtualisation platform, which it considered to be a more mature product – also offering better value for money – than the existing physical servers and Hyper-V virtualised systems. Included in the project was the upgrade of internal server infrastructure and back-up systems from a combination of local disk storage and an HP MSA2000i storage array.

## DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

"Also shaping our requirements was the process of updating WJEC's website, intranet services and our legacy applications," says Cunliffe. "It was imperative that we put the technical resources in place to support these developments, as they're critical to our business growth and expansion. A key element of this is the implementation of Microsoft SharePoint as our Document Management and Intranet system." With an expectation that the number of service users will increase dramatically, WJEC was looking for capacity, performance, robustness and scalability in its infrastructure, as the basis on which to build its future systems.

## PARTNER OF CHOICE FOR THE COMPLETE IT INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT

After going to competitive tender in late 2011, WJEC selected Annodata as its partner for the entire project, covering:

- Infrastructure
- Virtualisation
- Storage
- Back-up / Disaster Recovery
- Design
- The supply of new hardware – an HP Server and a new HP P2000 Storage array, appropriate software licences and Professional Services, and Veeam – for back-up and replication at the Treforest office.

## A 'ONE-STOP' PARTNERSHIP

So why Annodata? "We knew about Annodata's capabilities thanks to a previous relationship at CIO, Solution Architect and Technical Lead levels, though not on a major project like this one," says Gareth Roberts, Systems Engineer. "As part of a rigorous approach we select our IT partners not just for their ability to deliver but also for our ability to work closely with them in a trusting business partnership. From the outset we found it easy to form a good working relationship with Annodata."

He adds: "Annodata's approach was straightforward, honest and pragmatic – with a strong focus on delivering a good project specification quickly and cost effectively, to time and within budget. The real benefit in working with Annodata is that not only are they providing us with their Professional Services, knowledge and project capabilities, but they are also able to provision our hardware and software through the same contract. This avoids a commercially fragmented approach to putting together and delivering a project."

## ADDRESSING THE NETWORK, DATA AND APPLICATIONS LAYERS

- Annodata's solution addressed the entire landscape across the network, the data and the application layers for WJEC's two geographically separated offices.
- It involved implementing the VMware virtual hosting infrastructure on existing hardware, as well as pointing some existing physical servers and virtualised systems to the new infrastructure.

- Current SAN storage was extended, including resolving any host connection issues.
- Last but not least, a new data back-up system was implemented across both sites.

Technically speaking, Annodata's solution recommended purchasing the VMware vSphere Essentials Plus Kit. This adds features such as vSphere vMotion and vSphere HA, with the licensing allowing for a maximum of three hosts and two processors per host. The recommended solutions for back-up and recovery was based around the Veeam Back-up and Recovery suite and Back-upExec 2010 R3. Veeam Back-up and Replication ensures space saving, fast recovery, reliability and effective disaster recovery.

## A SOPHISTICATED 'FULL-BLOWN' SOLUTION

"Through a combination of Professional Services, project management, hardware and software provision, Annodata were able to deliver a 'full-blown' IT infrastructure for us," says Roberts, "involving virtualisation, storage, back-up, disaster recovery, design and more." He adds: "The original scope was to undertake the physical to virtual migration of two or three applications in the timeframe. But we were delighted that Annodata migrated 13 of our systems, over-delivering on the agreed implementation."

WJEC's CIO, John Cunliffe: "WJEC is a thriving organisation with sound plans to evolve and develop our business in exciting ways. We know that IT plays a critical role in our future as one of the pillars for achieving success. The IT infrastructure solution from Annodata is an important enabler, giving us the ability to grow and serve the needs of the business as we do so."

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Annodata is one of the UK's longest standing providers of Managed Services, covering Document Management, Unified Communications and IT.

**For more information on how Annodata can help you become a more efficient enterprise, please contact: [marketing@annodata.co.uk](mailto:marketing@annodata.co.uk) or Tel: 01923 333 333**



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