

Endemol moves to the cloud

Managing identity in a hybrid cloud media landscape



Customer profile

Founded in 1994, Endemol Nederland MediaGroep is an international TV production and distribution company based in the Netherlands. Endemol creates and runs reality and talent show franchises worldwide, appealing to television executives in the modern multi-channel world. Notable successes include Big Brother and Deal or No Deal.

The problem

With a large staff turnover, enormous quantities of data, and tight timescales, Endemol needed a flexible and fast way of streamlining its IT to bring greater speed and efficiency.

The solution

At the heart of the solution for identity, core office and business applications are Microsoft Forefront Identity Manager 2010 (FIM), Azure, Office 365, multi-factor authentication and Azure Active Directory. The elements are combined to make it possible for all Endemol's users globally to connect safely to different clouds with a single identity with correct authorisation.

Benefits

- Automated processes are fast and easy to use
- Massive cost savings - €600,000 in the first year.
- Data is secure - no more sleepless nights!
- Flexibility to scale up and down as required and pay for only what is used.

Since its formation in 1994, Endemol has blossomed from a small Dutch production company to become the world's largest independent production company. With a global network of companies in 26 countries, each year Endemol generates tens of thousands of hours of TV content and works with hundreds of broadcasters and digital platforms around the world.

The problem

With more than 600 staff moving in and out of Endemol a year, enormous quantities of data, and short periods between assignments and production, Endemol needed a flexible and fast way of streamlining its IT to bring greater speed and efficiency all round.

They had been running two of their own datacentres, in Hilversum and Amsterdam. A brave and pioneering decision was made to move all this into the cloud. In some areas, for business reasons, local IT applications in datacentres in Italy and France would remain, so the vision of a complex hybrid cloud landscape began to emerge. Endemol now needed help to turn the vision into reality.

The main challenge for Leon Backbier, IT Manager, Endemol Nederland MediaGroep, was to convince his team of the move to the cloud.

Jan Over, Managing Partner at Oxford Computer Group (OCG) NL says: "They were nervous of the leap into the unknown. Leon convinced his team by showing them the power, the opportunities and the savings the cloud would bring. Now the team is really happy and proud with the changes."

Why choose Oxford Computer Group as a technology partner?

Endemol had successfully partnered with OCG for a previous project to implement an identity solution using FIM in their datacentre. So it was quite natural for Endemol to approach OCG for help with moving the identity infrastructure to the envisioned hybrid cloud environment.

Leon Backbier says: "We decided to work with OCG the first time because of their proven FIM knowledge. This time we already knew what OCG could do. Their experience and knowledge is of great value to us. Also their culture fits with ours. They can act fast and flexibly and that is exactly what we need. OCG is big enough to have the knowledge and small enough to be flexible."

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Jan Over: "Endemol were planning to use complex hybrid cloud infrastructures on a worldwide scale and Leon knew from previous experience he could trust us to get it right. He liked our practical approach and knew that if we said we could get all their IT applications in the Cloud by October 2014, that we would."

The solution

Endemol brought together a number of cloud environments with very specific functions. For example, for sales activities they use Salesforce, and for storage of extreme volumes of data, including movies and TV programmes, they use Amazon. Other cloud service providers are used for security and collaboration between media programmes.

At the heart of the solution for identity, core office and business applications Endemol is using FIM, Azure, Office 365, multi-factor authentication and Azure Active Directory. OCG combined these Microsoft elements to make it possible for all Endemol's users worldwide to connect safely to the different clouds with a single identity with correct authorization. Manual processes have been automated. FIM orchestrates the connections: "It's the glue that holds it all together" says Jan Over.

"OCG's deep knowledge of FIM was vital," says Leon Backbier. "FIM is like the spider on the central point of its web. Around it applications can be linked. There is strict separation between the old and the new data."

When Endemol needed very specific functions within FIM, but these were not available as standard out-of-box, OCG consultants used their own tools and components, for example to integrate Endemol's telephony systems and wi-fi.

The project began in December 2013 and ran in phases. Initially, they used Endemol's on-premise production environment to set up a test environment in the cloud. Once this was built, all business applications moved over to the test environment. By spring 2014 testing could begin. The project went live in autumn 2014.

"The project was really worth the money. The investment was very small and the return is huge.

Now I can get a good night's sleep"

Leon Backbier, IT Manager, Endemol
Nederland Mediagroep

Benefits

- The overall cost of running Endemol's complex IT needs have been reduced significantly by €600,000 a year.
- When they create a new production, Endemol need extra capacity (people, resources or IT) quickly and often only for a few months. The hybrid cloud environment means they can scale up at speed, buying only the services they need as and when they need them. It's flexible, scalable and dynamic.
- Users get a more efficient and faster service with single sign-on to the systems they need.
- Endemol IT is freed from the responsibility of maintaining the hardware. He no longer gets emergency calls in the middle of the night or during his holidays. It is the cloud partner who is responsible for having the applications and services up and running."
- Leon says: "Our data is probably more secure in the cloud. Cloud partners have the knowledge, the money and the resources to protect the data."

What's next

OCG is supporting Endemol with a three year service contract to ensure the technology currently in place remains up-to-date and optimised.

The next step for Endemol is to move into the Bring-Your-Own-Device world. Their infrastructure is now in a condition to make this happen with relative ease.

Conclusion

Leon Backbier says: "The project was really worth the money. The investment was very small and the return is huge. We are saving €600,000 on operational and functional costs and now I can get a good night's sleep. This is worth a lot to me! But the main advantage is the flexibility we now have and the fact that we are no longer dependent on expensive systems."