

Case Study

All 3 Media

COBWEB



Cobweb Solutions switch on mobile communications for leading TV production

ALL3MEDIA, one of the UK's largest independent TV production groups and the power behind some of the UK's most popular TV programmes including Richard & Judy, Midsomer Murders, Formula 1, Fifth Gear and Hollyoaks, has turned to Cobweb Solutions for an outsourced IT solution to manage its communication and messaging requirements.

1 Customer Profile

Industry	: Media
Business Start Date	: 2003
Number of Employees	: 1000
Services with Cobweb	: Business Email

Following the deployment of Cobweb's Microsoft Hosted Exchange service, production teams within the ALL3MEDIA group can now access email, diary and address books whether they are in the office or on location anywhere around the globe.

ALL3MEDIA is headquartered in London and currently has over 1000 employees throughout the group. The company has doubled its turnover and size since its inception in 2003 through a combination of acquisition and strong organic growth.

Today, the companies that make up the ALL3MEDIA Group in the UK include Assembly TV, Bentley Productions, Chrysalis TV, Cactus TV, Lion Television, Mersey Television and NorthOne Television. Overseas operations include IdtV in the Netherlands, South Pacific Pictures in New Zealand and Lion Television in the USA. The company also has a distribution arm, ALL3MEDIA International.

As a fast growing international company ALL3MEDIA relies heavily on electronic communications to stay in synch across its operations. With much of the company growth coming through acquisition ALL3MEDIA needed a messaging and communication system that was able to be quickly delivered to new companies as they were purchased. The solution had to ensure efficient communication and collaboration between the head office, international operations and regional group companies, and be robust and flexible enough to support their expansion plans.

Prior to the implementation of Cobweb's Microsoft Hosted Exchange service, ALL3MEDIA used Chrysalis TV's legacy GroupWise messaging system. However, following the acquisition it soon became apparent that it did not meet the expectations and the working needs of the expanding group.

ALL3MEDIA quickly ruled out implementing its own internal Microsoft Exchange system and employing an in-house IT specialist, due to the significant expenditure this would incur. What ALL3MEDIA most wanted was a single scalable, flexible and secure company-wide communication system. It also wanted to avoid the IT headache of integrating different disparate systems each time it acquired a new production company.

IT director of ALL3MEDIA, Damien Frost commented, "Email is a business critical application for ALL3MEDIA but I knew from the start that I would not have the time to deal with the daily hassles and threats from spam, viruses, system failures and backups. Security of our systems is a top priority and I wanted to ensure that the solution we put in place would provide comprehensive protection.

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2 The Challenge

As our company grows, so do the number of email accounts required and with that comes the problem of spam, Cobweb's Microsoft Hosted Exchange service which includes MessageLabs Anti-Spam service provided us with the level of protection we wanted. In my view, email management and all that comes with it is something best outsourced and dealt with by a dedicated and experienced IT partner."

A key requirement for ALL3MEDIA was a mobile working solution that would provide its production teams, who are frequently on remote locations, the ability to keep in regular contact and share information with colleagues back in the office.

After reviewing the available options ALL3MEDIA made the decision to move off the legacy Novell GroupWise system, and source a hosted communications and messaging solution that could meet the complete needs of the business, including accommodating mobile working.

Personally I am very passionate about Cobweb delivering a real value-added service that will help their SME business grow and that can offer them the flexibility to meet the individual business requirements.

As Belvoir continues to expand, they can rest assured that the Hosted Services migrations will remain simple and effective due to our experience, knowledge and systems, making it simple for them to scale."

3 The Solution

Within three months, instead of the expected twelve, ALL3MEDIA had entirely switched its messaging and mobile working requirements to Cobweb Solutions. At the time of implementation just over 300 email users were setup and this has now risen to over 450. Damien Frost comments, "ALL3MEDIA has grown rapidly over the last two years. With Cobweb's managed service in place, we can deliver a cost-effective solution to the newly acquired companies and production teams as and when needed."

Cobweb's predictable monthly pay per user model allows ALL3MEDIA to set up temporary offices for any number of staff, irrespective of location, and when the programme has been completed the additional users can be removed. This approach allows the Formula 1 production team, a NorthOne Television production, to stay in email contact with the main office in the UK, using mobile devices such as BlackBerry's when covering races.

Damien Frost adds, "This has created massive cost savings, as it is far cheaper to send emails than it is to make international phone calls from mobiles back to the UK. It has also enabled us to avoid expensive dial up costs from laptops."

Michael Frisby, Business Development Director concludes, "At Cobweb we recognise that the nature of the TV production industry requires an incredibly flexible mobile communications and messaging solution. Cobweb's Microsoft Hosted Exchange service provides ALL3MEDIA with the security and functionality required to meet their business needs, with the added guarantee that any email problems will be dealt with quickly and efficiently, with no disruption to their business."

With day-to-day email management and mobile working taken care of, Damien Frost is now able to aid in the development of business strategies for future acquisitions and concentrate on looking after the more strategic aspects of ALL3MEDIA's IT network and infrastructure.



The Channel 5 motoring show 'Fifth Gear'