



Databarracks' case study

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS IMPROVES RESILIENCE WITH DRAAS TO AZURE

About Hillier Hopkins

Established in 1933, Hillier Hopkins is a leading independent Chartered Accountants with offices in London, Watford and Milton Keynes. It provides advice and support to individuals and businesses ranging from small family enterprises to large international corporations.

The Challenge

Barrie Cox is Hillier Hopkins' Senior IT Manager. He joined the business as the first IT professional and has led the technology function for over twenty years. "In the time I have been here, Hillier Hopkins has gone through several technology transitions. We've gone from Windows 3.1 Workgroups to a client-server network on our premises.

"We later took the decision to move our IT infrastructure out of our premises. Initially that was with co-location but over time we moved away from ownership of the infrastructure altogether. We now use a managed hosting service. The service provider is responsible for the infrastructure and we take responsibility from the VM level up.

"Our business is increasingly online. The industry is going through digital transformation with initiatives like Making Tax Digital. Technology is critical for us because we deliver many of our services digitally. Customers will view, approve and download their documentation via a client portal for instance. IT is fundamental to how we deliver our services now."

For Hillier Hopkins, this growing demand on technology required a re-evaluation of its Disaster Recovery methods.

"Although the managed hosting infrastructure is built to be resilient, it didn't offer any protection against incidents affecting the entire data centre. We obviously had offsite backups, but any event needing recovery from backups would take from 36-48 hours. That was no-longer acceptable to the business."

The Solution

Databarracks provides Disaster Recovery as a Service to Azure with Zerto.

"We began working with Databarracks in 2015, initially replicating to Databarracks' data centre, The Bunker. Over time as the technologies have evolved, we had the opportunity to change that recovery destination to Microsoft Azure. We have confidence in Azure as one of the largest public clouds. The combination of that scale with the high standard of service we get from Databarracks is the best of both worlds

"My first experience of working with the Databarracks team, setting up Disaster Recovery in 2015 was very positive. The project was professional and smoothly handled from planning through to testing and sign-off. This time around, changing from The Bunker to Azure was even faster.

"Any change of technology throws out minor complications. In this case, there were compatibility issues with some systems on Azure. This wasn't an issue on our production

environment or even in our previous DR environment, but had to be ironed out to work properly in Azure. This is where the support really stands out. Databarracks work with us to systematically work through those changes before testing our recovery to make sure it works exactly as needed.

The Benefits

For Hillier Hopkins, the most important benefit is speed of recovery.

“Fundamentally, the solution from Databarracks reduces our recovery time. IT is critical to how we deliver our services. In the past, the team would spend more time on the phones and dealing with post and paperwork. It was a much more manual business.

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Now, we are a more productive, modern organisation. The only downside of that transformation is that we are more reliant on IT and our tolerance for downtime shrinks as a result.

“DRaaS is something that I never want to have to use, but I need to know that if it does need to be called upon, it will deliver.

“We have a relatively small team of three in our department. That is sufficient for us to manage the day-to-day work but we always have several other projects running. That might be introducing a new system or an external change like the end of life of an Operating System or a change in tax. As a result, we rely on the expertise of specialist service providers like Databarracks to supplement our skills and to extend the team when we need them.”

“Over the past few years, information security and resilience has become a greater requirement from our customers. The GDPR certainly raised awareness and in the last 12 months I have fielded more requests about our IT than ever before. It definitely helps that we can answer definitively about how we deal with any kind of IT incident.”



About Databarracks

Databarracks is the UK's specialist business continuity and IT disaster recovery provider.

In 2003, we launched one of the world's first true managed backup services to bring indestructible resilience to mission critical data.

Today, we deliver award winning data and continuity services from some of the most secure data centres in the world, 30 metres below ground in ex-military nuclear bunkers, supported 24/7/365 by our team of handpicked experts.

We make enterprise-class continuity, security and resilience accessible for organisations of all sizes.

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