Overview

MoneyWeek is the UK's best selling financial magazine. Published every Friday, it is a weekly investment magazine that covers financial and economic news and provides commentary and analysis across UK and global markets. It is regarded as the best, most powerful read for anyone interested in defending and growing their wealth in Britain today. The magazine's aim is simple: "to give readers intelligent and enjoyable commentary on the most important financial stories, and tell them how to profit from them." The magazine is head-quartered in London, where it employs around 100 staff across editorial, advertising and support / back office functions.

As part of its ongoing review of technology provision to the business, the IT team at MoneyWeek faced some challenges around the existing Microsoft Exchange 2003 platform. The company was supporting thousands of messages a day across 300+ mailboxes; email traffic and the number of mailboxes was growing all the time, and the Exchange 2003 platform was out of support. As a result MoneyWeek decided to upgrade to MS Exchange 2010. Alan Smith, systems manager at MoneyWeek, had already worked with specialist IT partner System Professional for technical consultancy around MS Exchange 2003, so it was a natural choice to turn to the team there again to help reconfigure the company's Exchange environment, as well as the associated server infrastructure.

The Solution

The majority of organisations rely on email as their prime communication medium; however email in a magazine publishing environment is critical. Magazines survive on their ability to get the scoop or insight on stories and much of that is about speed – particularly for a weekly publication like MoneyWeek which is producing numerous stories each week for the magazine and website. Alan Smith explained:

> *"Email was increasingly being used as a mission-critical tool within MoneyWeek and I needed to ensure we had a stable, resilient and scalable Exchange platform in place for the business. I had been impressed with the high level Microsoft Exchange consulting from System Professional in the past so they were the natural partner to use for the Exchange 2010 migration project."*

Following a number of technical planning and scoping sessions with the System Professional project team, a revised design and project plan was agreed for the Exchange 2010 upgrade. This involved an initial server virtualisation of the MoneyWeek infrastructure and the introduction of two storage area networks.

The MS Exchange migration involved the creation of a new Exchange 2010 group in the virtual environment with two Exchange mailbox servers and two combined hub transport/client access servers. Following the new infrastructure deployment the Exchange migration was performed successfully.

However, changes to MS Exchange 2010 from previous versions meant that Load Balancing was a critical new requirement to the project. The big changes Microsoft has made to its core server architecture in Exchange 2010 create exciting new opportunities to manage the server infrastructure for always-on reliability and cluster-enabled application acceleration. Most important of these is Microsoft's Exchange 2010 strategy to emphasise scale-out, rather than scale-up, making the right load balancing solution more critical than ever. Now that Exchange Client Access Server (CAS) is used to handle all client connections, both internal and external Outlook connections must be load balanced.

To ensure the right load-balancing solution was in place, System Professional installed a redundant pair of KEMP Virtual LoadMasters (VLM 100) into the newly virtualised MS Exchange 2010 environment to achieve both fault tolerance and optimise performance. The KEMP LoadMaster family simplifies

deployment of the compete portfolio of advanced messaging applications and protocols used by Exchange 2010 -including Outlook Web Access, Outlook Anywhere, ActiveSync, SMTP, POP3 and IMAP and RPC Client Access (Native MAPI).

With built-in SSL acceleration and/or overlay, the LoadMaster offloads a key source of CPU drain to improve the capacity of Client Access Servers. Layer 7 healthchecking at the LoadMaster ensures that should one of the servers become inaccessible, the load balancer will take that server off-line, while automatically re-routing and reconnecting users to other functioning servers. Wayne Emerson, commercial director at System Professional commented:

> "Microsoft Exchange 2010 has driven the need for load balancing in an Exchange environment but it's still critical to get the right solution in place for the customer's needs. It's all too easy to spec a product with all the bells and whistles ever needed but our view is that you must balance the functionality required with the budget available.
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> Wayne continued: "We've worked with numerous load balancing products over the last few years but the excellent products from KEMP Technologies, combined with its partnership approach to working with companies like System Professional made them the right choice for us to recommend to MoneyWeek. We are hugely confident in the ability of their team and the technical support and responsiveness was second to none. Many vendors push their technical support out to the channel but for us, dealing with the KEMP technical team directly made our job so much easier in terms of deployment. Our strategy of a virtual environment for MoneyWeek meant KEMP's VLM-100s a further and very successful dimension to that by saving power, cooling and rackspace for the customer."

MoneyWeek's Alan Smith concluded: "With the upgrade to Exchange Server 2010, System Professional has helped MoneyWeek to consolidate our messaging infrastructure into a highly available and scalable environment. The new platform provides better support to our business users and has significantly reduced IT costs from both a user support and hardware management perspective."

Why KEMP Technologies
The Kemp VLM-100X was chosen as it provided the most feature rich product at the right price for MoneyWeek. System Professional also wanted a vendor it could work in partnership with that was accessible and easy to deal with when it came to technical support.