

Assisting U.K. Government in Meeting G-Cloud Objectives



Skyscape Cloud Services helps U.K. public sector realize digital vision with cloud-based services powered by Cisco UCS and Nexus switches

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: Skyscape Cloud Services

Industry: IT services

Location: United Kingdom

Number of Employees: 50

Challenge

- Provide public-sector customers with economies of scale for IT
- Enhance automation and improve asset utilization

Solution

- VCE Vblock with Cisco Virtualized Multiservice Data Center validated design

Results

- Delivered more than 50 percent of G-Cloud web services with just 50 staff members
- Helped reduce cost of gov.uk website hosting by more than 90 percent
- Achieved G-Cloud market leadership in just over two years

Challenge

Founded in 2011, Skyscape Cloud Services is sharply focused on public-sector cloud computing. As a business startup operating within the U.K. government's G-Cloud procurement framework, it had to create from zero a highly scalable and secure data center infrastructure, using efficient technologies to pass on time and cost savings to its government customers.

Solution

Skyscape Cloud Services based its data center architecture on a validated Cisco® Virtualized Multiservice Data Center design. "Our business is all about delivering an assured cloud for U.K. government, while Cisco is undoubtedly the market leader in terms of security and encryption devices," says Chief Executive Phil Dawson.

The cloud service provider has four Vblock 300GX units in production plus two Vblock 300EXs for testing and development. Each Vblock has a switching platform with Cisco Nexus® 5548UP Series Switches with Cisco Nexus 1000V Series Virtual Switches, Cisco Unified Computing System™ (UCS®) B200 M3 Series Blade Servers on Cisco UCS 5108 Series Blade Server Chassis, and UCS 6248UP Series Fabric Interconnects. Security is through Cisco ASA 5585-X Series Adaptive Security Appliances and Cisco ASA 1000V Series Cloud Firewalls.

"Cisco tools have enabled us to automate provisioning throughout the UCS blade compute platform," says Chief Technology Officer Simon Hansford.

The infrastructure is spread across two data centers more than 80 miles apart, running in an active-active configuration. This was a challenge since the EMC VPLEX virtual storage used across the two centers had never been deployed at this distance. To overcome latency issues, Skyscape Cloud Services relied on Cisco technologies such as Overlay Transport Virtualization, along with Cisco Services expertise to help plan, design, build, and deploy the infrastructure.

Results

The degree of virtualization and automation has enabled Skyscape Cloud Services to support major projects at low cost and with minimal staffing requirements. "Partnering with Cisco, we're able to use Cisco validated designs and leverage the enormous amount of R&D that Cisco does, in turn making sure we remain a lean organization," says Dawson.



“The Cisco Services team really stepped up to support an aggressive delivery timescale for a very complex systems environment. We simply could not have done that without their support.”

Phil Dawson
Chief Executive
Skyscape Cloud Services

With fully-compliant, dedicated multi-tenant cloud services from data centers in the United Kingdom, Skyscape Cloud Services has become the leading provider for the government’s G-Cloud program, building more than 50 percent market share in just over two years. “The support from Cisco was essential in helping Skyscape to grow rapidly in its target market,” Dawson adds.

As part of this success, Skyscape Cloud Services won the contract to host several hundred British gov.uk website domains. In so doing, the company was credited with helping to save more than 90 percent of the previous cost of supporting the domains.

“The Cisco Services team really stepped up to support an aggressive delivery timescale for a very complex systems environment. We simply could not have done that without their support,” says Dawson. Going forward, the Cisco cloud service catalog will help Skyscape Cloud Services deliver new virtualized offerings such as Platform-as-a-Service, relying on Cisco validated designs implemented on a build-operate-transfer basis by Cisco Services.

Simon Hansford sums up: “We all know Cisco makes very reliable products. My team also really benefits from a close relationship. We’re able to ensure we are using Cisco technologies correctly, that we have insight into the Cisco roadmap, and are developing a cloud platform that remains future proof.”

For More Information

To learn more about the Cisco architectures and solutions featured in this case study go to:

www.cisco.com/go/nexus

www.cisco.com/go/ucs

Product List

Data Center

- Cisco Unified Computing System (UCS)
 - Cisco UCS B200 M3 Series Blade Servers
- Cisco UCS 5108 Series Blade Server Chassis
- Cisco UCS 6248UP Series Fabric Interconnects

Routing and Switching

- Cisco Nexus 5548UP Series Switches
- Cisco Nexus 1000V Series Virtual Switches
- Cisco ASR1000 (ASR1006) Series Aggregation Services Routers
- Cisco Nexus7000 (C7009) Series Switches
- Cisco Nexus 7000 (C7010) Series Switches
- Cisco ASR 9000 (9006) Series Aggregation Services Routers

Security

- Cisco ASA 5585-X Series Adaptive Security Appliance



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