Digital Media Firm Uses ExtremeZ-IP®
to Streamline Productivity and Efficiency

Acronis®

"We're very happy with ExtremeZ-IP. It makes a world of difference when things are reliable."

Gareth Craig Taylor, IT Director, Forward

Challenge:

Repeated Server Crashes Lead to Lost Work and Business Delays

At Forward, a well-respected, creative content agency, frequent server crashes were halting workflow and disrupting business—sometimes several times per week. Business would be humming along at the mid-sized firm, when suddenly one of its four servers would go offline. Work would grind to a halt, and while waiting for connectivity to resume, upwards of 75 employees would be unable to work.

"The servers would crash about once a week and be down for an hour," said Craig Taylor, Forward's IT director. *"We'd restart them, and people would find that they had lost a lot of what they had been working on."*

Forward's IT staff found that software instability of the Apple® OS X Server software was behind the frequent server crashes. For a savvy media firm that had staked its reputation on sharp, high-quality work and making deadlines, sustaining a productive work environment was absolutely essential.

Key Challenges:

Most of Forward's 70 employees and 30 freelancers use Macs to connect to the company's Windows-based servers. Weekly crashes on the company's Mac OSX servers were causing massive disruption to workflow: business was halted in the downtime and hours of valuable work could be lost with each crash. Forward's IT team replaced the OS X servers with one Windows server, but needed to ensure their Mac users could easily connect to the Windows server without crossplatform problems.

Key Benefits:

After ExtremeZ-IP's implementation on the company's new Windows server, crashes stopped and employees were able to work unfettered by network errors.

The IT team searched for a third-party solution to integrate the company's many Macs® into other Windows®-based server network, and quickly came across GroupLogic's ExtremeZ-IP® solution in the trade press. *"We were looking for a much more robust file server that could condense down hardware requirements so that we didn't have to run multiple servers – and we needed reliability,"* Taylor says.

The IT team also considered Microsoft's® SMB solutions, but neither offered the comprehensive services that come with ExtremeZ-IP, from simple file sharing and network access to printer server access, all using Mac's native (and preferred)Apple Filing Protocol (AFP). *"We were already aware of ExtremeZ-IP's reputation, so we went with it,"* says Taylor.

Solution: GroupLogic's ExtremeZ-IP Enables Scalability, Reliability

ExtremeZ-IP is deployed on Windows-based servers. In contrast to other Mac to Windows solutions, it works with Active Directory and Apple Filing Protocol, which is how Macs are designed to connect to larger networks.

This allows for seamless access to the network across multiple operating systems, without interruption, for enterprise Mac and Windows users.

"We conducted some testing and made sure we didn't have any issues with it, then we migrated over the weekend," says Taylor. *"Installation and testing were not complex procedures. It's very easy to set up and deploy."*

Organization Background

Founded in 1985, Forward was one of the first contract publishing agencies in London, and today has evolved into a multi-channel content agency that produces digital content and custom publications for major brands and products. The company's award-winning print pieces are now accompanied by fully integrated, cutting-edge digital solutions in the retail, luxury, finance and automotive sectors.

Happier Workplace, More Productive Employees

All of Forward's departments use the file sharing system. Taylor is so pleased with GroupLogic's ExtremeZ-IP that he rarely thinks about it. *"We're very happy with ExtremeZ-IP ,"* he says. *"Under the previous system, employees were on edge, waiting for the crash; now that it's no longer an issue, no one even thinks about it. It makes a world of difference when things are reliable."*

About Acronis®

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