

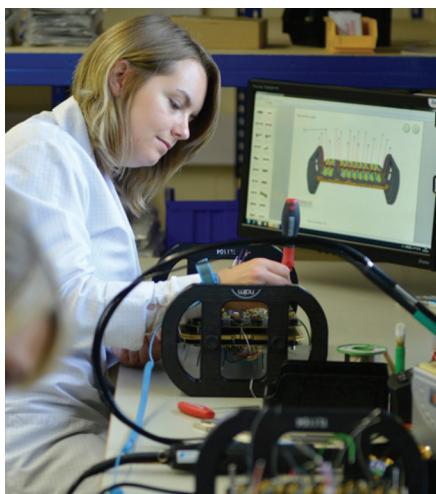


SUMMARY

Exel Computer Systems plc was looking for a partner to support its Enterprise Resource Planning software, EFACS, in the cloud for a growing number of customers who wanted to move from an on premise solution. The company chose iomart to provide a secure and cost effective cloud platform that would allow customers to scale as they grow.

BENEFITS

- Secure cloud platform
- Flexible and scalable solution
- Reduced server and hardware administration
- Improved cash flow
- Enterprise class backup



"With the DR facility from iomart, we can give all customers using our software added data protection and resilience."

The Challenge

Exel authors and supports a proprietary Enterprise Resource Planning software solution called EFACS. In recent years, it has had an increasing number of enquiries from prospects and existing customers – which range from food manufacturers through to automotive and aerospace manufacturing companies – to host the software in the cloud rather than on premise.

Jonathan Orme, Sales Operations and Marketing Manager for Exel, explains. "Until recently most of our customers were happy to install our software in their own offices, but as they've seen more businesses move to the cloud successfully, and learnt about the resilience and other benefits it can bring, they've become much more interested in taking a hosted cloud solution from us."

■ The Approach

Exel opened discussions with AWS and Microsoft, plus a number of managed cloud service providers, including iomart. Adam Shepherd, IT Systems Manager for Exel, explains. "We provide our EFACS software as a standard product to each customer, which can be easily configured to suit their exact requirements, so it was important to us to have a partner we could talk to, where a person would respond to our requirements and would get to understand our business and what our customers really needed."

iomart already supplied Exel with domain names, so a new conversation was opened up around potential cloud hosting. It soon became clear to Exel that iomart's CloudSure platform would provide it with the resilience, security and flexibility that it needed to offer a hosted cloud environment to its customers.

■ The Solution

CloudSure from iomart offers Exel a secure and highly available cloud solution. Rather than being hosted on a single server, it is hosted in a virtual machine (VM) cluster in a secure and named UK data centre that is owned, operated and supported 24x7x365 by iomart.

iomart also provides Exel with enterprise class cloud backup based on EMC Avamar. This provides further resilience for the EFACS database(s) for rapid restores and recovery in the event of a virtual machine failing.

Connectivity is via a site-to-site Virtual Private Network (VPN) so Exel customers can connect quickly to a VM that appears to them to be on their local network. This resolves any potential issues that might arise with printing, email or data migration. Access to the iomart system is only available for Exel's support and systems management team. iomart takes care of the licensing, which is particularly important for smaller customers of Exel who have limited IT resources.

The CloudSure platform from iomart is easy to use. Machines can be spun up with the correct amount of memory very quickly. Exel can install software for a new customer within minutes. Exel releases a new version of its software once a year as well as ongoing patches, all of which can be updated easily and effortlessly.

iomart is one of the leading providers of managed cloud services in the UK. Listed on the Alternative Investment Market of the London Stock Exchange, it owns and operates data centres at eight locations across the UK. Jonathan Orme explains, "The fact that iomart has financial stability and continues to invest heavily in its infrastructure and network is not only reassuring to us, but also to our customers."

Exel also uses iomart for Disaster Recovery. "We've had customers who've had floods and fires which have caused huge disruption," Jonathan continues. "With the DR facility from iomart, we can give all customers using our software added data protection and resilience."

■ The Results

The relationships Exel has with its customers are long-lasting, so it wanted a hosting partner that would be as close and supportive as it is with the companies that use its software.

"The relationship with iomart is very good," says Adam Shepherd. "I spend a lot of my time tweaking our offering to make it individual for each customer, and each time I'll speak to iomart about the best way to support it and keep the costs down for our customer."

As Exel's customers become more comfortable about putting their data in the cloud, they will benefit by moving to a more flexible Opex (operating expenses) model, enabling them to be more cost efficient.

Jonathan Orme concludes, "Cloud is becoming a big sales tool for us. There are some customers we could not have sold our software to without having iomart's cloud supporting it. Working together with iomart our customers don't have to worry about security, and when they want to scale up, we have the ability to instantly scale the resource to meet their demands."

■ About Exel Computer Systems

Exel Computer Systems plc is a leading force in the provision of integrated business solutions for manufacturing companies and field service providers. Exel supplies companies with state-of-the-art, flexible business solutions, to enable them to achieve leading-edge business operability. www.exel.co.uk

iomart has the cloud and infrastructure expertise to meet the most complex IT requirements.

From cloud strategy to fully managed and secure platforms, talk to us today about how we can support your business ambitions.

Get in touch by emailing: info@iomart.com or call us on **0800 040 7228**