MANAGED SERVICES

The London School of Economics and Political Science – A lesson in resilience

LSE is one of the foremost social science universities in the world. It is a specialist university with an international intake and a global reach. Its research and teaching spans the full breadth of the social sciences, from economics, politics and law to sociology, anthropology, accounting and finance and, as the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise found, it has the highest percentage of world-leading research of any university in the UK.

With over 9,000 students and almost 200 study programmes available, LSE generates huge amounts of information every day that needs to be appropriately managed and securely stored. Historically, all of the data produced by the university was stored in two on-site data centres. However, as one of these data centres neared the end of its life, **LSE looked to Sungard Availability Services to take over its data centre operations and provide resilience in the face of any interruptions or unplanned disruptions.**

Before working with Sungard AS, LSE's IT department spent an increasing amount of time maintaining the older of its two data centres. A number of outages were caused from the failure of key infrastructure (e.g. air-conditioning) within the facility. This had a knock on impact in delivering more strategic projects. LSE needed to find a cost-effective way to secure and store its data going forward. In addition to this, LSE was keen to build resilience into its data centre operations. This meant finding a co-location strategy that mitigated the risks associated with its location in central London.

Why Sungard AS?

For LSE, it was the July 7 attacks in London of 2005 that really brought home the importance of having alternative backup sites away from its campus in the heart of the Capital. Its location in the heart of London and next to the Royal Courts of Justice puts the university in an area at risk in terms of terrorist threat.

Therefore, **when considering how best to run its data centre operations, Sungard AS was the obvious choice due to its extensive network of fully resilient and secure Technology Centres**, which enjoy tri-angulated high bandwidth connectivity for heightened flexibility and robustness. The infrastructure allowed LSE to confidently co-locate its data centre operations and backup data away from its own on-site centre.

Another key factor in LSE's decision to work with Sungard AS was the **high level of resilience offered in comparison with other industry players and its 30 years' heritage of providing live production support during system recoveries, and experience of protecting organisations' data.**

"As with most organisations, our data is very much our crown jewels so we needed the right partner to help us both to protect and ensure 24/7 availability of our critical IT systems. Sungard Availability Services provides us with the most resilient infrastructure and advanced data vaulting solutions available, backed up by a team that really understands our needs."

Adrian Ellison,
Assistant Director in IT Services

SUNGARD®
AVAILABILITY
SERVICES™

"The level of professionalism and expertise we receive from Sungard is outstanding. From the initial consultation and planning stages, through to the migration of our data centre and the day-to-day running of our IT systems, Sungard's people have gone out of their way to understand our organisation, identify our needs and listen to our concerns."

Adrian Ellison,
Assistant Director in IT Services

With data at the centre of everything that LSE does, any interruption or loss of information could cripple the organisation and those that work and study there.

Initially, there had been reluctance amongst the LSE board to outsource its data centre operations as handing over critical data to a third party was understandably perceived to be a big risk. However, Sungard AS was able to overcome this by agreeing to stringent Service Level Agreements (SLAs). Sungard AS also arranged for senior LSE staff to visit Technology Centre 2 (TC2), Sungard AS's highly resilient facility in Docklands, to see the quality of the location where LSE's data would reside. This convinced LSE's senior people that Sungard AS was a trusted and expert partner, and more than capable of storing and backing up its critical data.

Using Sungard AS's electronic Vaulting Solutions, all of LSE's critical systems and data, which totals over 40 terabytes of data held on 97 servers, remains available to all students and staff, even in the most severe cases of disruption.

Working with Sungard AS means that LSE's IT department is now free to focus on other projects which benefit the efficiency and performance of the University, rather than spending the large majority of its time worrying about data centre matters such as power supply and air cooling systems, which were fast becoming major and expensive concerns.

As part of the electronic Vaulting Solutions, **Sungard AS also undertook an up front Data Profiling exercise, which helped LSE to better understand its data and storage practices.** With the amount of data that LSE needs to store and manage growing by 40% each year, storage management had become time consuming and very complex.

Sungard AS's value added report on LSE's data usage trends revealed that over 70% of the University's data had not been accessed in over six months and 20% of the total amount of data was duplication. This insight put LSE in a better position to prioritise its recovery strategies, improve the efficiency of its data storage and backup, and actually formed the basis of its IT strategy going forward.

▼

"We are now very much leading the way amongst our peers by adopting an outsourced and multi-location approach to data centre operations and information availability. Knowing that our data is in safe hands has allowed us to focus our resources on other projects which provide better systems for our staff and students."

Adrian Ellison,
Assistant Director in IT Services

By adopting a co-location data centre strategy with Sungard AS, LSE is able to take advantage of Sungard AS's 'intelligent hands' service. Sungard AS has taken on the day-to-day management of LSE's data centre operations, backing up all services on the LSE network, which is in turn backed up to Sungard AS's high-resilience network. This means that LSE's IT staff are now able to concentrate on other critical IT projects. Sungard AS has also taken charge of receiving and building new hardware at TC2 meaning that LSE's IT team only has to visit the Technology Centre to perform configuration.

The future

Following the successful migration of LSE's data centre to TC2, LSE is now in talks with Sungard AS to see how it can further develop its data centre functionality. Areas of focus going forward will include developing a continuous web presence to safeguard the LSE's website, which receives 13,000 visitors a day on average to its home page. LSE is also undergoing a software virtualisation programme to better deliver and target applications to its users and to allow improved remote access to core IT Systems for staff and students. Once again, **its co-location approach to data centre operations, and the infrastructure and expertise provided by Sungard AS, will ensure that LSE remains resilient should it decide to adopt a more virtualised IT strategy.**

Business benefits

Working with Sungard AS has not only provided LSE with data centre resilience and 24/7 Information Availability; Sungard AS's Data Profiling has also helped LSE to better understand its data, allowing it to identify mission critical information and revise its recovery strategies to reflect this. In addition, the use of Sungard AS's 'intelligent hands' has allowed LSE's IT team to hand over responsibility for data centre resilience and storage and concentrate its activities on more strategic priorities such as new innovations to improve processes, learning and teaching within the university.

About Sungard Availability Services

Sungard Availability Services provides managed IT services, information availability consulting services, business continuity management software, and disaster recovery services. To learn more, visit www.sungardas.co.uk or call 0800 143 413

EMEA Head Office:
Unit B Heathrow Corporate Park, Green Lane, Hounslow, Middlesex TW4 6ER
+44 (0)800 143 413

Belgium
+32 (0)2 513 3618 www.sungardas.be
France
+33 (0)1 64 80 61 61 www.sungardas.fr
India
(+91) 20 673 10 400 www.sungardas.in
Ireland
+353 (0)1 467 3650 www.sungardas.ie
Luxembourg
+352 357305-1 www.sungardas.lu
Sweden
+46 (0) 8 666 32 00 www.sungardas.se

Connect with Us

twitter.com/SungardASUK

linkedin.com/company/sungard-availability-services-uk

facebook.com/SungardAS

youtube.com/SungardAvailability

blog.sungardas.co.uk