Protected

Case Study: Hawke's Bay Regional Council

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Familiar On-Premise Solution

New Zealand's sixteen regional and unitary councils are responsible for the integrated management of land, air, and water resources, supporting biodiversity and biosecurity, providing for regional transport services, and building more resilient communities in the face of climate change and natural hazards.

Hawke's Bay Regional Council (HBRC) serves 180,000 citizens and is responsible for a 14,200 square kilometre land area with a diverse coastline, mountain ranges and productive hills and plain country, including the two main cities of Napier and Hastings.

This large responsibility requires significant resources and HBRC employs around 320 staff at any given time including contractors.

Infrastructure

In addition to the huge amounts of data that HBRC stores and uses day-to-day, ensuring such a large team has instant access to the right information and digital tools requires a robust and reliable network infrastructure.

Rob Simpson is HBRC's Network Architect and has been with the council for 10 years. He has designed, built and continues to maintain and administrate the council's network infrastructure – ensuring that it is scaled as required and provides staff with consistent access to the data and software solutions they need.

Simpson says that the network is run on three critical equipment racks that house servers, storage, network access and comms equipment and that continuous uptime and ensuring consistent network access is vital to the council's operation.

"Our network supports dozens of software platforms that need constant uptime and availability as well as the communications of around 320 people. We are effectively a 24/7 operation, for example our science team may need to access data or take readings on an experiment at midnight on a weekend," says Simpson.

On-premise vs Cloud

Having previously adopted a cloud-first policy, in line with other NZ regional and city councils, it became apparent that some of the software platforms could not deliver the responsiveness and usability

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when hosted in the cloud such as the council's sophisticated mapping software which is frequently used by most departments and requires significant processing power.

The HBRC made the decision to return some necessary systems to an on-premise set up in 2020, with the balance now being around 75:25 between cloud and on premise for mapping.

He says that this presented an opportunity to address several fundamental factors such as server room layout, services and the back-up power approach for the organisation.

"Typically, we had a few UPSs of varying brands and ages. When one reached the end of its life, we bought a new one and plugged it in. I knew there was a better way to have a more thorough and cost-effective approach with an emphasis on having assured network uptime so we looked for a company that could deliver what we needed and would be around long term to support us," says Simpson.

Long-term power strategy

Simpson engaged UPS Power Solutions because of their nationwide service and strong, long-term solution approach.

He says that once the system design and equipment list was agreed, the installation could have been heavily impacted by the advent of the Covid pandemic, but UPSPS already had a robust strategy around the safety of their team and HBRC staff and conducted the installation with no disruptions.

"We were really pleased to find UPSPS. Their team came to look at the server room and the main switchboard, and the rest was easy. They shipped the units to us early to ensure that everything was ready when their engineers came to conduct the installation.

"They also designed a smaller-footprint power solution with batteries housed beneath the UPS units, giving us back valuable server room and rack space, along with the bypass switches and ongoing support. We're now confident and assured that our system can cope with any power interruptions or outages," says Simpson.

Familiar requirements

UPSPS sales director, Graham Blackmore says the solution Hawke's Bay Regional Council required was a perfect example for many businesses and organisations throughout New Zealand.

"We get to work on some exciting and interesting projects but often, the most rewarding ones are straight forward deployment of high-performance UPS equipment that simply improves the confidence an organisation has in its power and its ability to function.

Many businesses are aware that there is a better way to ensure reliable power, but often wait for an operational trigger before they get in touch with us – such as a move back to an on-premise system architecture, or replacing end of life or undersized equipment," says Blackmore.

UPS Power Solutions provides advice to businesses or organisations that want more confidence in their power availability and will happily provide insights and services into how a solution can be designed and deployed to deliver ongoing value and assurance.