

Softcat delivers the visibility Future Publishing needs to improve efficiency and enhance end user experience

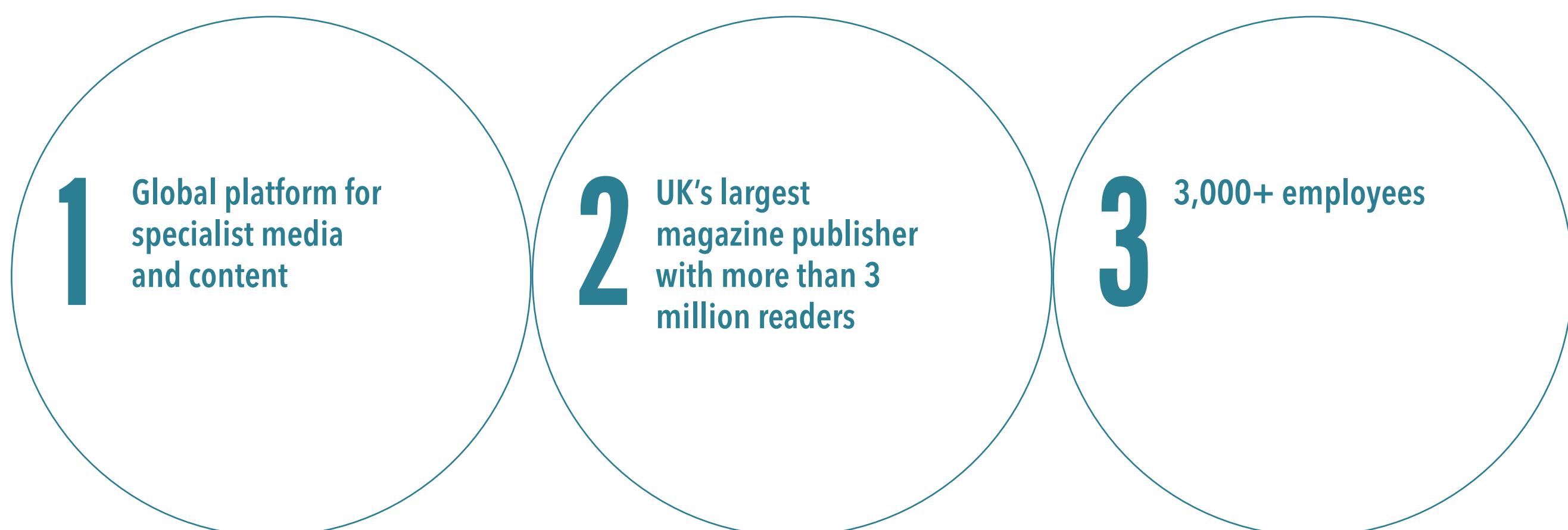
Published

Founded as Future Publishing in 1985, Future Publishing has grown to become a global platform for specialist media and is home to expert content and some of the world's biggest media brands.

With more than 3,000 employees across a portfolio of 200 high-profile brands, its websites, magazines, events and social spaces are viewed online by one in three UK and USA-based adults. It's the largest magazine publisher in the UK and has a combined circulation of

more than 3 million readers across multiple publications. Future Publishing harnesses proprietary technology and innovation to develop new platforms, diversify audiences and unlock new opportunities.

Key Facts



The Challenge

Flexible working has become the norm, rather than the exception for many businesses, especially following the disruption caused by the Covid pandemic. One of the biggest challenges businesses face is effectively maintaining visibility of the PC estate and ensuring it has a clear view of the end user experience. "Covid meant we had to adopt a far more flexible way of working and created issues around our capacity to monitor what was happening across our PC estate," said Nathan James, Future Publishing Director of IT services.

"I couldn't see what my customers were experiencing daily, or fully understand how those issues may impact their efficiency or levels of frustration. Due to the ongoing restrictions, I no longer had the option to just send one of my Service Desk or End User Services team to personally

visit the customer to understand their issues and resolve them.

"To compound the issue, many users were working in 'uncontrolled' environments, which eliminated any control we had over network access or over how good or bad any user's service was. Often, what was initially perceived as an 'IT issue' was down to where users were working, for example a coffee shop, and had nothing to do with our corporate services."

Future Publishing had been considering implementing a digital employee experience (DEX) solution for some time and contacted Softcat for help with procuring fit-for-purpose technologies to resolve the challenge at hand.

Critical Success Factors

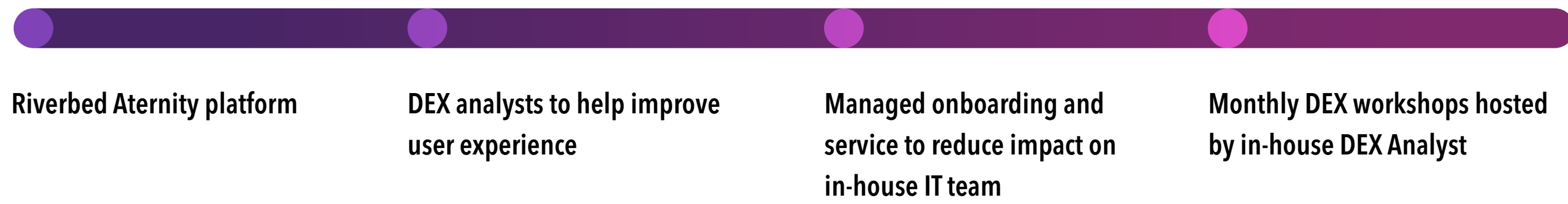


The Solution

Softcat recommended a managed DEX service underpinned by the Riverbed DEX Intelligence platform. The solution would enable Future Publishing to implement a broad range of telemetry across user devices, network, infrastructure, cloud and applications, which is then presented with dedicated DEX analyst reporting. It would provide Future Publishing with the intelligence it needed to optimise user's digital experience through harnessing the platform to identify, prevent and resolve a range of IT issues.

One of the issues associated with any DEX solution is the sheer volume of data created. This can place intolerable strain on in-house resources due to the amount of analysis required and the impact of any required response. With a managed service, staffed by a highly-skilled analysis team, Future Publishing's in-house IT team would avoid increasing its workload and be able to concentrate on its core functions, including carrying out remediation work and providing an optimal user experience.

Solution Highlights



The Benefits

"I've been monitoring the evolution of DEX services for some time and, in my view, the solution provided by Softcat and Riverbed is one of the best available."

Nathan James,
Future Publishing Director of IT services.

One of the main benefits of Softcat's managed service solution is the insight and comprehensive analysis it provides alongside highly valuable recommendations on improving the digital experience during monthly workshop calls.

"I've been monitoring the evolution of DEX services for some time and, in my view, the solution provided by Softcat and Riverbed is one of the best available," said Nathan James.

"It's easy to become bogged down with the sheer volume of information generated - a true example of not being able to see the woods for the trees if ever there was one! "With Softcat's managed service providing high-value analysis, there's no need for my IT team to wade through massive volumes of device information, trend analysis or deciding which piece of data to act upon. The DEX Analysis team does all the heavy lifting and provides a monthly summary highlighting the most pressing issues we have to respond to and facilitating an effective response through invaluable insights.

"We actively use the Aternity DXI score to reflect the overall health of our Windows estate. By acting on insights from the Softcat DEX team, Aternity helped to highlight a service relating to one of our PC management tools that was silently crashing. We used this data to drive service improvement from the software vendor.

"Further, by using DXI data and filtering by device models and operating systems, we identified that device DXI scores are, on average, 10 points higher when running Windows 11 over Windows 10. We're using this data to drive our approach to the upcoming Windows 11 upgrade programme to ensure that the most performant and capable laptops are upgraded while others will fall into a device refresh programme.

"The device-specific data is also actively used to diagnose performance issues. For example, a particularly widely used laptop model gathered many incidents to be logged with our service desk. We were able to use Aternity's real-time data to highlight performance bottlenecks and suggest actions to improve users' experience, such as running fewer tabs in the browser and rebooting if the last boot time date suggested it was required.

"Month on month we're seeing the Experience Score improve. It's providing a quantitative measure of improvements and helping to reduce the impact on customers - something that would have been much more complicated and challenging without the Softcat team managing it for us. Without the Softcat service, I doubt that we would have made the great progress as quickly as we have. Their insights and support have been invaluable!"

Benefits at a Glance



Why softcat

With wide-ranging industry knowledge and specific expertise in a range of leading-edge IT solutions, Softcat's specialists bring a deep understanding of what is required to address individual client's most pressing business needs. Its managed services enable organisations to access innovative technologies and harness the most up-to-date solutions capable of improving operational performance without negatively impacting in-house resources.