

MCLAREN AS SAFE AS HOUSES WITH SOFTCAT O365 AND AZURE HYBRID CLOUD SOLUTION

Cloud & managed services



Datacentre



Networking & security



Office 365 and Azure hybrid cloud
migration

620 employees

Solution covering multiple technology
areas

An award-winning contractor who have been in business for over 16 years, McLaren Construction (McLaren) have an established reputation for consistent delivery of outstanding projects across all market sectors. They are one of the UK's most successful privately-owned companies with a strong reputation.

The Challenge

McLaren have grown exponentially over the past 15 years and as a result of this their IT systems needed to be updated to meet their increasing demands as well as to prepare them for future growth. McLaren wanted a flexible and scalable IT solution, which could adapt and develop in line with the business.

McLaren's IT Infrastructure had been designed when McLaren was a much smaller business and as such did not have the scalability or resilience that McLaren now requires. This included Exchange 2010 and Lync 2013, and on-premise data centres. Core network connections to each of their offices and project sites also needed to be improved to meet current requirements and continued growth.

McLaren wanted to partner with a company who were the right cultural fit, as well as ensuring the chosen partner had strong technical competency and excellent knowledge of the various IT technologies and vendors which would form the solution. It was also important that the chosen company could provide strong support services to ensure the continued success of the implemented solution.

The Solution

McLaren wanted to invest in products and services which would adapt and scale as their business continued to grow. The combination of MS Office 365 and Azure offered this, as well as providing many other benefits for their business.

For Azure, the core project components were:

- **StorSimple** – This is an on-premise SAN product available to Enterprise Agreement customers. This was provided to allow McLaren to rapidly access the data they need on-premise whilst also protecting the data in the cloud.
- **Backup** – As part of the project to run a backup server on-premise, Softcat also provided Azure services to protect key workloads in the cloud.
- **Disaster Recovery** – Softcat designed, tested and implemented Azure Site Recovery to protect McLaren's Hyper-V and physical workloads.
- **Networking** – McLaren's combination of MPLS and site to site VPN connectivity was upgraded to a managed VPLS WAN with an Express Route into Azure. This provides a private corporate network with an optimised resilient connection directly into the MS Cloud.

For the datacentre requirements, Softcat proposed utilising our hosted datacentre service whereby Softcat would fully manage this service for McLaren. McLaren also decided to upgrade several components in their infrastructure, acquiring Nimble storage and Dell Hyper-V hosts. This technology was installed by one of Softcat's internal consultants after being designed by the internal team at McLaren, Chris Redding, Softcat Datacentre Specialist, and Softcat's internal presales team in conjunction with Nimble.

Another element of this project was for Softcat to provide a hosted unified collaboration platform to maximise McLaren's investment in Skype for Business. As the Office 365 PBX was not sufficient to offer a viable solution Softcat proposed utilising one of our trusted partners, MeetingZone's, platform to fulfil this collaboration requirement.

In order for the project to be delivered successfully, all of the components needed to be compatible to ensure they could work together.

Connectivity played a large role in underpinning the McLaren project by providing a seamless transfer of applications over the WAN. Softcat worked with another trusted partner, Exponential-e, to deliver the connectivity solution to McLaren. The WAN not only connected the offices and construction sites but also all of the key datacentres and platforms including Azure and Skype for Business. This network was secured by an Enterprise class security solution securing all data in and out of the network. This element of the project is supported by Softcat's 24/7 service desk.



The Benefits

Softcat provided a significant amount of resource to McLaren for this project. This included datacentre specialists, connectivity specialists, project managers and Office 365 & Azure specialists. This team was headed by McLaren's dedicated Account Manager, Billy Smith. The volume and quality of the resource Softcat provided was paramount to the success of the project.

McLaren now have gigabit connectivity to all of their regional offices with the ability to increase this as required. Utilising the resource of both Softcat and Expo-E, the connectivity elements of this project were delivered well ahead of schedule. The new datacentre gives McLaren the scalability they required as well as providing the resilience and security needed. Their long-term backup retention has now been extended to 12 years in line with McLaren's requirements leveraging Azure's scalable service, on a cost per use model.

When talking of the benefits of the project, McLaren Group's Head of Infrastructure and Technology, said, "Softcat did an exceptional job, in a very aggressive time period. Transforming the McLaren core-infrastructure and collaboration services, ahead of time and on budget."

One of the greatest benefits to arise out of this project is the greater relationship which has been formed between McLaren and Softcat. Softcat are now a strategic partner of McLaren Group. McLaren are now looking at methods to enhance their investments in the technologies and products they have adopted and they are working with Softcat to enable them to do this.

Why Softcat?

Prior to this project, McLaren had worked with Softcat to obtain various hardware and software but there was no strategic relationship. The Head of Technology and Infrastructure at McLaren commented, "When I moved to McLaren, I was introduced to Softcat and I quickly learnt how dedicated their account team were." It was this dedication from the account team which led to Softcat being chosen for this project.

When summarising, McLaren said, "It is the people that make Softcat who they are, the Softcat McLaren Account Team made this the success it was. The entire team at Softcat, as well as the partners, have gone above and beyond during their journey with us. They have been available day and night to respond to issues and help us through some of the difficult challenges we faced. Since using Softcat, we have gained valuable trust in their people who have always delivered to date."

Solution Highlights:

- Strategic partnership between McLaren and Softcat
- Future proof solution
- Strong support from the Softcat Account Team
- Migration and consolidation of existing infrastructure to cloud platform