

# EXTRINSCA GLOBAL'S NEXT-GENERATION CLOUD FABRIC

Datacentre



Professional services



Networking &amp; security



**Extrinsic Global is a dedicated cloud services provider, integrating and delivering applications to any device over the public internet as a secure, seamless, end-to-end service to customers across the globe. For over seven years the business has established itself as a leading exponent of cloud-based application delivery, delivering services to customers from their single multi-tenant cloud platform. Ahead of their time and with experience preceding 'cloud' as the phenomenon it is today, Extrinsic has built a range of innovative, high quality, end-to-end cloud solutions that give companies the ability to work in new ways and realise the many benefits of cloud-based IT.**

## The Challenge

Through 'in the trenches' experience and trends seen in its customer's consumption requirements, Extrinsic decided to revamp its business model as a catalyst for its next phase of growth. A bold new strategy would see the business move away from providing one size fits all cloud services to the small business market from their multi-tenant platform to being able to deliver the complex integrated functionality required by mid-market companies from the most appropriate cloud platform (shared, private or hybrid) to meet their IT needs.

This would be a significant business transformation exercise for Extrinsic which needed a new, flexible, scalable IT infrastructure to support the new service model. The existing Dell platform, based on conventional rack mounted servers whilst reliable and up to the task of supporting a modest user population with "vanilla" services had reached capacity and would certainly not be up to the dynamic highly scalable requirements demanded of larger businesses. Simon Smith, Chief Executive, explains, "There were significant limitations to what could be achieved with our original multitenant platform. For example, if a customer came to us and asked if we could integrate a document management solution with an email system we couldn't do it as a one size fits all approach. We therefore wanted the ability to build them a highly integrated private cloud platform - then this problem goes away as there's maximum choice for the customer to have whatever they want."

The vision is that Extrinsic customers will be able to move all their IT, or as much of it as they wish, into the cloud. Simon Smith continues, "They'll then benefit from genuine enterprise-grade cloud infrastructure and all of the availability, security and protection benefits that come with that. This represents an important transition for our customers – effectively turning them from IT owners into IT consumers. The cloud platform would then flex as consumption habits change over time."

Over the next four years, the business has an aggressive growth plan and ambitions to support 15-20000 users on the new fabric-based infrastructure dubbed the 'EV3 Cloud Fabric'. When Extrinsic approached longstanding partner Softcat for help, support from Cisco had already been enlisted and a high level blueprint for the fabric agreed. Extrinsic now needed an expert partner to come up with the detailed solution architecture and manage the delivery of the project to a successful conclusion.

Adam Smith, Security and Networking Consultant at Softcat elaborates, "Cisco had already been chosen to supply the compute and network technology but advice and guidance was needed on which products, in which configurations, including the storage, was most suitable for the task and importantly commercial support to ensure Extrinsicica was getting the best possible value when the project was being fuelled by outside investment coming into the company."

## The Solution

Adam Smith continues, "Once we understood the vision for how the infrastructure needed to operate, we were able to build a comprehensive design for the solution. Initially we needed to build the environment to support 6000 users as this would accommodate the first phase of growth anticipated after launch. After that, however, Extrinsicica wanted the ability to add 'chunks' of new capacity in a modular fashion without the need to redesign the network with each addition."

After much evaluation with vendors and engineers, a state-of-the-art solution was proposed built around the latest Cisco UCS blades, firewalls and switch appliances complemented with NetApp SAN storage. Combined, this would provide the phenomenal compute capacity and scalability Extrinsicica was looking for - all within a smaller physical footprint therefore enabling a much more dense compute environment and the foundations to build sophisticated hybrid cloud environments.

The new fabric would be a multi-datacentre solution in an active-active configuration, so whilst equipment would be hosted at two geographically disparate locations, it would always be in use. In the event of a failure, each data centre would have the capacity to maintain all services until the second datacentre was back on line again. Extrinsicica had previously delivered all its services from a single datacentre so alongside the recommendations on technology. Softcat also offered advice and guidance in the due diligence necessary in selecting a second site to help host the fabric.

The size and scale of the project meant it would take place over a 10 month period and would push the boundaries of innovation. As a result, the project was not without its obstacles. The project was broken down into phases each of which required Softcat to deliver things quickly be that technically or commercially to hit project deadlines. "They did an exceptional job at mitigating risk right through the project and cushioning us from unforeseen circumstances – be that holding stock to get the best possible price on the technology we needed or just thinking one step ahead on the design and configuration implications," comments Simon Smith.

## The Benefits

The new fabric provides everything Extrinsicica needs to realise the strategic vision and future growth plans of the company. On this fabric, they will be able to build lots of individual cloud platforms: shared, private and hybrid implementations to deliver bespoke, highly-integrated solutions depending on the precise needs of the customer.

## Why Softcat?

The complexity of the project required a very personalised service from Softcat as Simon Smith explains, "They got right beside us and helped us architect the solution and every technology component we would need to build the fabric - our working relationship has been very, very close, so much so it's difficult to pick the right adjective to describe just how close! It was literally a day by day relationship; they did all of the really difficult work for us and played an incredibly important role."

## Summary

Simon Smith concludes, "Put simply without Softcat as the intermediary between us and the vendors involved in the solution this project would not have been possible."

With the new fabric now live, Extrinsicica plans to actively work with Softcat on a host of services that can be offered to Softcat's customer base.

Put simply, without Softcat as the intermediary between us and the vendors involved in the solution, this project would not have been possible

Simon Smith, CEO  
EXTRINSICA GLOBAL

## Key Facts

- 7 year heritage delivering cloud services
- Pioneer ahead of their time
- Enabling companies to work in new ways and be more competitive

## Critical Success Factors

- A highly flexible and scalable infrastructure required to support new business mode
- Ability to scale up to 20,000+ users
- Enterprise class availability, security and protection
- Expert integrator needed to create solution architecture and manage project to a successful conclusion

## At a Glance

- Highly integrated, bespoke cloud solutions possible
- Rapidly add compute resources as “chunks” of capacity
- No need to rebuild network with each upgrade ensuring longevity
- Expert partner mitigated risk and cushioned unforeseen circumstances

## Solutions Highlights

- State-of-the-art solution built on Cisco compute and networking technology plus NetApp storage
- Phenomenal compute and capacity resources
- Multi-datacentre solution in active-active configuration to maximise technology investment
- Modularised solution design