

# Centrinet launches UK's first operational zero carbon data centre with help from IBM

## Overview

### ■ Customer challenge

*To help companies reduce the carbon footprint of their business-critical IT systems.*

### ■ Solution

- Centrinet launched an innovative business service – Smartbunker – based on renewable energy and energy-efficient technology
- UK's first managed data centre service committed to zero carbon energy
- Powered by renewable energy from Ecotricity
- Based on energy-efficient IBM BladeCenter servers and Cisco networking hardware
- Secure and scalable.

### ■ Customer benefits

- Drastically reduces environmental impact – power consumption cut by around 60%
- Unique proposition, offering high-performance data centre services powered by renewable energy
- Highly-scalable IT infrastructure provides business flexibility.



With the current legislative, economic and social backdrop, many companies are reviewing their energy use and looking at ways to cut power consumption. CIOs, meanwhile, are trying to balance the increasing desire to be more environmentally friendly with the need for extra computing power to drive business transformation initiatives.

Centrinet, a Lincoln-based organisation that provides IT management services, recognised that most UK data centres were designed with business needs in mind, rather than the environment. It also recognised that reversing the emphasis was neither straightforward nor inexpensive and set out to devise a new solution.

Its unique idea was to build a data centre, designed to run efficiently on entirely renewable energy, and to offer this as a hosting service to clients. Named Smartbunker, the facility was

built in a remote nuclear bunker that had undergone a £15m Home Office refit in the early 90s, and then stood empty for a decade before being bought by Centrinet.

Centrinet's business strategy was to power their 30,000sq ft purpose-built data centre entirely from renewable energy. They brought in Ecotricity, the wind turbine specialist that offers clients a zero carbon tariff.

Ecotricity has operated since 1996 and is the only independent green electricity company that builds its own renewable energy sources. It supplies many large organisations and its customer numbers have doubled each year for the past three years. Ecotricity builds and operates wind turbines on partner sites, and these partners then receive a dedicated supply of green power at reduced rates. The company has ambitious plans to change the way electricity is generated in the UK.

Having established the power supply, Centrinet, which supports more than 24,000 end-user organisations in 65 countries, looked for an IT platform to offer a green alternative to clients.

“Right from our first dealings with IBM, we were very impressed,” says Kelly Smith, Managing Director at Smartbunker. “We were not an IBM customer prior to this, but we were aware of its green credentials, and that undoubtedly helped.

“The products put forward by the other companies could not match IBM’s in terms of performance, energy efficiency or reliability. The solution we chose will also enable us to expand the business very quickly, without any concerns about overloading our IT infrastructure.”

IBM has been committed to reducing waste and minimising its impact on the environment for decades, and its green heritage adds credibility to its client offerings – from hardware to consultancy. The solution proposed for Centrinet was based on the IBM Blade system. This takes up much less space and uses less energy for the same computing tasks, which is important given the physical size and environmental aims of Smartbunker’s operational base.

“We now have an innovative proposal to take to our target market, which can be any size of company from a web-design agency to a Blue Chip enterprise,” says Kelly Smith. “Our unique offering is based on three key aspects. First, we’re environmentally efficient through both our power supply and the fact that the IBM computers are helping us to cut our energy usage by about 60%. Second, our base is underground within three-metre thick walls in the depths of Lincolnshire, so our physical security levels are exceptionally high.

And third, we provide high-performance, highly-resilient managed hosting services with year round, 24x7 support.”

Over the next 18 months, Smartbunker intends to expand rapidly and IBM’s flexible infrastructure will enable the company to scale up its operations. “We were impressed right from the very first call we put into IBM, in terms of both the product and the levels of service,” concludes Kelly. “It was a competitive bid, and IBM was head and shoulders above the competition.”

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