

Bonhams

Kelway implemented a cost-effective, scalable platform on which to run an in-house developed, web-based auction management solution

Bonhams

Owned and run by British auctioneers since 1793, London-based Bonhams is the fastest growing fine art auction house in the world. Dealing in items including automobiles, antiques and collectables, Bonhams offers sales worldwide through its salesrooms in London and other UK locations, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Sydney, and regular venues in Switzerland, Monaco, Germany, Australia and the U.S. Bonhams is renowned for its specialists -in 14 countries- who appraise and value clients' property and ensure that it achieves its full sale potential.

The Challenge

After an acquisition by Brooks, an automobile and motorcycle auction specialist; the merger with the UK division of Phillips, a competitor; and the purchase of the U.S.-based auction house Butterfields; Bonhams was dealing with four different business management systems. To operate and serve clients effectively, Bonhams needed to consolidate to one system.

Sold to the lowest bidder "We knew that current off-the-shelf auction management software and enterprise resource planning [ERP] systems would need a lot of customisation and significant monetary investment to handle our operational size and global distribution," explains Roland Whitehead, Global Director of Technology for Bonhams. "So we chose the in-house development route based around best-of-breed financial and human resource packages, and the Progress [Software Corporation] OpenEdge environment." The auction house also needed a reliable, scalable solution that would enable it to offer Web-based transactions and services. Once its in-house solution was developed, Bonhams started searching for a new platform on which it could run. "The obvious solution for Progress was the Sun Solaris operating environment, but when we looked at the cost of an adequate Solaris solution, we choked at the huge expense," says Whitehead.

Moreover, Bonhams was interested in the scalability and stability of Linux. Based on a positive previous experience with IBM Intel®-processor-based servers and the deep IBM commitment to Linux, Bonhams selected an IBM xSeries solution running Linux. "We chose IBM because of the cost-effectiveness, quality and scalability of the xSeries products," explains Whitehead. "We also knew IBM had done extensive testing to ensure the xSeries servers could efficiently run Linux."

"Kelway's IBM Team quickly understood our needs and provided us with xSeries servers that run our Linux operating system reliably and with minimal attention."

Roland Whitehead, Global Director of Technology, Bonhams

The Solution

Working with IBM Business Partner Kelway, Bonhams acquired ten x360 servers and eight x232 servers. Eight of the x360 servers are running Linux and two are running Microsoft® Windows® 2000. All of the x232 machines run Windows 2000 and function as file, print and exchange servers. The core of Bonhams' auction management system runs on the x360 servers- three for Web serving, two for application and database

functions, two for images, one for Web-delivered reports, one for disaster recovery and one for development. The x232 machines operate as local servers in each of Bonhams' UK regional sales locations. The company went live with its xSeries and Linux solution in January 2003.

The Results

By consolidating to the reliable and scalable xSeries architecture and Linux platform, Bonhams anticipates reduced maintenance and administrative activities. "We have reduced our server count by two," explains Whitehead. "And we're saving money by eliminating the maintenance and licensing costs on both." The xSeries servers deliver exceptional cost-for-performance benefits, and can scale as Bonhams' needs evolve. Linux provides a flexible, open architecture and helps simplify integration of multiple processes and applications. The IBM and Linux solution provides a robust foundation and helps position Bonhams to

become what IBM calls an e-business on demand™ enterprise- one whose business processes, integrated end to end across the company and with key partners, suppliers and customers, enable it to respond quickly to customer needs, economic conditions and external threats. Bonhams feels that its new, cost-effective server solution has put it ahead of its competitors. "The cost of our new system is approximately one-fortieth of what competing auction houses have invested in theirs," emphasizes Whitehead. "And since they have tweaked off-the-shelf ERP solutions, their systems won't provide nearly the same benefits.

London City Office
St Mary's Court
20 St Mary at Hill
London, UK, EC3R 8EE
t +44(0)20 7375 3757
f +44(0)20 7375 1525
e info@kelway.co.uk

London Docklands Office
Building 1000
Dockside Road
London, UK, E16 2QU
t +44(0)20 7055 6055
f +44(0)20 7055 6200
e info@kelway.co.uk

Basingstoke Office
Vertex, Chineham Court
Lutyens Close, Basingstoke
Hampshire, UK, RG24 8AG
t +44(0)1256 697222
f +44(0)1256 697100
e info@kelway.co.uk

United Arab Emirates Office
Business Central Towers
11th Floor, Suite 1106B
Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai
PO Box 500833, UAE
t +971 4 801 9279
e info@kelway.co.uk



www.kelway.co.uk