

## CMC Markets

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New network for enterprise-class data centre

## CMC Markets

A market maker in online retail financial services, CMC Markets is both a global leader in the provision of contracts for difference (CFDs) and one of the largest financial spread betting service providers in the UK. Headquartered in London, CMC Markets' international network of 23 strategically chosen offices support clients from over 85 countries worldwide. During the financial year 2007-2008 CMC Markets handled over 20 million trades with the trades executed having a total value of \$1.4 trillion (USD) across the full CFD product range. The unprecedented growth in demand meant that a lot more space was needed for expansion. For Chris Malley, Infrastructure Architect & Project Manager, the ideal solution was to open a brand-new data centre in London's Docklands.

## The Challenge

Creating a new data centre is always a challenge. For CMC Markets, strong business growth was set to place increasing demands on its existing facilities. Using Kelway's installation expertise, CMC Markets has created a new data centre in London's Docklands using state-of-the-art technologies including Cisco 6500 series switches and Check Point firewalls.

"We needed to put in an enterprise-class data centre solution," said Malley. "Our existing data centre network had grown over the years and, to ensure we could keep up with the company's demands into the future, we wanted to start with a clean sheet and build the best network that we could."

*"The new data centre was a very substantial programme of work. Kelway proved to be a worthy supply partner – they were responsive and did exactly what we asked them to do."*

**Chris Malley, Infrastructure Architect & Project Manager, CMC Markets**

# Best-in-Class Network

Although the overall programme meant implementing everything from power distribution to application servers, getting the data centre's network right from the outset was vital. CMC Markets required a highly-scalable, best-in-class solution for its immediate and future requirements. The company was already a committed Cisco user which left three objectives for the network - scalability, manageability, and availability. The first step was to ask Cisco for advice: what would be the ideal enterprise model?

"Cisco came up with some good ideas which enabled us to scope out a rough design," said Malley. "We then hired an independent consultant from Intergence Systems Ltd to refine our design down to component level."

By late 2007, this work was complete including an equipment list, network diagram, and details such as security zones. CMC Markets then wrote a request for proposals, seeking a partner to

'supply, install, and maintain'. A shortlist of three suppliers - including Kelway - was drawn up. While pricing is important - CMC Markets always demands good value - it wasn't the sole consideration. Supplier responses were assessed on key criteria such as implementation schedules, testing, network monitoring, engineers' skills, spare parts availability, and service level agreements.

Having previously worked with CMC Markets to supply network equipment, its consultants understood the project's importance within a tight implementation schedule.

"We looked at the individual features in the responses and a combination of factors led us towards Kelway. We then spoke to some reference sites and got some good feedback," said Malley. "The new data centre was a very substantial programme of work and the network was a fundamental underpinning for everything. We satisfied ourselves that Kelway could do it."

## Tight Deadlines

The order was placed at the end of 2007, giving Kelway a tight three-month deadline. It included supplying 12 Cisco Catalyst 6509 switches, two Nokia Checkpoint firewall appliances, installation, training, and, arranged by Kelway, a three-year support and maintenance agreement from Phoenix IT Services.

"Kelway went through our equipment list and they identified anything that didn't look right. It was a very detailed piece of work," said Malley. "Once we were confident the list was correct, we ordered the equipment."

Staging the new hardware was done in Kelway's well-equipped labs. This process helps minimise any 'dead on arrival' problems while providing useful pre-installation information. Once fully checked, everything was sent to Docklands for installation by Kelway engineers. This work ran in conjunction with the deployment of new servers as well as WAN and internet connections.

Although 'supply and install' appears straightforward, no project of this size is ever without some minor hitches where integration is concerned. But thanks to a single point of contact with Kelway, CMC Markets had easy access to its technical specialists.

"We had a couple of Kelway consultants sit with our engineers in the data centre to troubleshoot any integration issues," said Malley. "Kelway have been good in helping us do this and we're pretty happy with the work that they've done. They also did some training for our support team."

In meeting the demanding deadline, Malley highlights the effectiveness of the Kelway account manager along with the professional attitude of the company's consultants. Kelway engaged very effectively with CMC Markets' technical staff during the installation, training, and handover period. A comprehensive support and maintenance service is now being delivered by Phoenix IT Services as planned. This not only helps Kelway offer rounded solutions but provides the reassurance of a two-hour response for a mission-critical facility. And, after new data centre went live in Autumn 2008, it was scalable, highly-available, and much easier to manage too.

"Kelway has proved to be a worthy supply partner. They were responsive and did exactly what we asked them to do. We would certainly use Kelway again," said Malley

# Technical Solution Detail

CMC Markets used a Cisco Catalyst 6509 chassis solution. This is a modular switch which allows the slots to be populated with various different cards. In addition to offering sufficient port density, the switch also allows some of Cisco's advanced technologies to be used such as the Cisco ACE module (part of the Cisco family of data centre 3.0 solutions).

The ACE product family provides scalable next-generation application switching that maximises application availability, scales application performance, offers secure application delivery, facilitates DC consolidation, and reduces costs.

CMC Markets also used the Cisco firewall services module - a high speed, integrated module for the Catalyst 6500. It offers a number of advanced features to help reduce costs and operational complexity. Through virtualisation, the module also delivers multiple firewalls on one physical platform.

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