

Data#3 Customer Story

SeaRoad Holdings

SeaRoad Holdings chart a digital transformation course with HPE GreenLake



Data#3



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Industry Insight

“We have delivered a better outcome to our user base. Where we used to have a huge number of tickets per day, since the deployment of the new infrastructure, the issues have gone away. This means our staff are happier, and applications are faster and more reliable.”

Cliff Reardon,
General Manager for Digital Technology,
SeaRoad Holdings.

Objective

SeaRoad Holdings wanted to replace problematic, ageing infrastructure with an efficient, flexible solution that would improve reliability and performance.

Benefits

- Greater reliability of systems
- A scalable and flexible solution
- Reliable foundation for digital transformation
- Ability to provision extra capacity from the buffer in minutes, not months to procurement
- Harness the benefits of public cloud type services while simultaneously keeping workloads on-premises for increased security, privacy, and control
- Increased productivity
- Strong and reliable foundation to enable future digital transformation projects
- IT team able to spend time on higher priority activities
- Predictable expenditure

Solutions & Services

- ✓ HPE SimpliVity
- ✓ HPE StoreOnce
- ✓ HPE GreenLake ‘as a Service’

Approach

SeaRoad’s ageing IT infrastructure was in need of a complete overhaul. Key staff members had evaluated HPE SimpliVity in a previous role, and quickly identified its suitability as a foundation for the future. Data#3’s local expertise as well as their partnership with Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) made them a logical choice of partner for the project.

Testimonial

“HPE is highly regarded here in Tasmania, and they have local experts who appreciate our situation. Their close relationship with Data#3 was a real help when making such substantial changes, and their communication helped make sure we were all working towards the same goals.”

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“Data#3 was an easy choice. We knew the quality of their locally based engineers well, and we knew they had a strong relationship with HPE, and that they have actual experience with the HPE GreenLake platform.”

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The Background

Since the 1890s, SeaRoad Holdings (SeaRoad) has performed a vital role in providing freight services between Tasmania and the mainland of Australia. As a proud family-owned business, it ensures the island state’s community has access to necessary goods, while supporting local businesses as they take their outstanding products to the world.

SeaRoad’s legacy IT environment no longer supported the business’ growing needs, and had become outdated. The resulting reliability issues caused frustration for the IT team, staff, vendors and customers alike. A dependable foundation was needed so the business could introduce new systems into their environment.

The Challenge

The transfer of goods between Tasmania and Victoria is of utmost importance, supplying the community with its needs, and enabling businesses to trade. General Manager for Digital Technology, Cliff Reardon, said that SeaRoad’s busy fleet carries everything from fine produce to construction equipment across the Bass Strait on a daily basis.

“Facilitating freight across the Bass Strait is vital to the state’s economy, so SeaRoad takes pride in delivering a dependable service, rain or shine. We knew we needed that same reliability from our technology.”

The infrastructure in place was ageing, and this had led to issues that frustrated everyone that leveraged our platforms. The IT team fielded an average of 35 support calls per day, so they spent a lot of their time attempting to manage underlying problems.

“Our staff are used to battling the elements, but they should not have to battle technology as well. Application performance was underwhelming, downtime was not uncommon, and speed was lacking. These factors impacted on the confidence our IT team had in their technology,” explained Reardon.

“Security of older infrastructure is not designed around current threats, and we knew it was essential that our organisation was protected. While we had measures in place that would allow us to switch to paper-based systems if a security incident occurred, we knew it wasn’t ideal.”

The project was not only about fixing problems, though; SeaRoad wanted to build a modern environment that would allow it to undergo a digital transformation. A new system for loading and unloading ships more efficiently was a priority, but this required the right underlying technology.

“We needed a solution that was more than just fixing outages, we wanted to build something that allowed us to accommodate capacity increases, and to modernise the way we work, so that we can provide the best possible service to our customers. While public cloud didn’t suit our needs, we did want an ‘as a Service model that gave us the same advantages of scalability and cost management,” continued Reardon.

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“We can rely on our applications even more now since the deployment of the new HPE SimpliVity solution, and having a foundation set on the HPE GreenLake ‘as a Service’ model, means we have confidence that no matter how our business evolves, we will be covered.”

**Cliff Reardon,
General Manager for Digital Technology,
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IT Outcome

A member of the IT leadership team had reviewed HPE SimpliVity previously, an intelligent, AI-driven hyper-converged infrastructure solution in a previous role, and proposed it would meet SeaRoads requirements as it could be deployed by HPE under the GreenLake ‘as a Service’ model.

HPE GreenLake offers a choice beyond traditional on-premises or public cloud, instead providing on-premises cloud services, where organisations can deploy an edge to cloud platform in their own data centre or in a co-location facility. It made sense to the team to work with Data#3 on the project.

“Data#3 was an easy choice. We knew the quality of their locally based engineers well, and we knew they had a strong relationship with HPE, and that they have actual experience with the HPE GreenLake platform,” outlined Reardon.

Leveraging HPE GreenLake for the deployment of the HPE SimpliVity solution offered cloud benefits and HPE monitoring and support in a modern, efficient environment. While SeaRoad only pays for the infrastructure that is used, a buffer is provided beyond projected capacity needs. Extra capacity can be added in a few clicks. This makes a great alternative to cloud, and avoids the overspend that is common with both on-premises and cloud environments. In fact, 67% of organisations over-invest in storage solutions, while a third have either run out of capacity or experienced high utilisation rates that impact performance¹.

“We didn’t want to oversupply, as that would mean spending on infrastructure that still had to be maintained and managed. Instead, we get the type of elasticity associated with an ‘as a Service’ solution, and as our needs grow, we just add more capacity. The buffer capacity is there if we need it, and HPE keeps track of our needs,” explained Reardon.

The solution features a wealth of modern security features, with updates performed by HPE under the ongoing agreement, so that the SeaRoad IT team spends less of its time on the underlying environment.

“HPE SimpliVity has far more advanced backup and recovery features than our previous environment, so we have confidence that our data will be there when we need it. Best of all, we aren’t experiencing the outages and slowness, which means that our number of support calls has dropped drastically, and the end result is that our IT team, staff and other users of our platforms have a consistently exceptional service.”

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Business Outcome

From a starting point with frequent outages affecting the business, SeaRoad’s user experience has come a long way. Performance is consistently high, and morale has lifted as a result.

“Any user, whether in an operational role or in our corporate office, would have found it frustrating when simple tasks were interrupted by performance issues. The right IT environment means they can get more done and work more efficiently. The feedback has been positive, and the business appreciates what the IT team has achieved,” said Reardon.

Risk management is a high priority throughout the business, both on vessels and in the office. This extends to the IT environment, and the more secure HPE GreenLake environment has considerably reduced risk of data loss and of cyber security incidents.

“The threat landscape changes considerably over the life of infrastructure, so ageing equipment is something we identified as a risk. A modern, well-maintained environment is better designed to address current threats to our business,” commented Reardon.

SeaRoad had the future firmly in mind when making choices around their IT infrastructure. Like every industry, freight and distribution is undergoing profound change, driven by the opportunity that new technologies bring. The HPE GreenLake environment has already paved the way for progress.

“We see technology as an opportunity to improve the services we deliver, as well as to make our own organisation more efficient. Already, we have invested in new systems that improve loading and unloading processes of our vessels, something that would have been impossible with our old legacy environment. Now that our IT team has more time away from dealing with support requests, they can proactively find ways to keep improving what we do,” outlined Reardon.

“Because we chose the ‘as a Service’ solution, we have predictable, monthly costs instead of large lump sums, and this also makes it easier to plan our IT budget needs accurately, and that helps us to schedule our activities to give the best return to the business.”

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Conclusion

The value of skilled IT staff has been displayed as organisations have navigated the challenges of recent years, and SeaRoad is no exception. By reducing the day-to-day time needed for managing infrastructure, these resources have been able to add more value to the business.

“Going through the fast-changing restrictions through the COVID-19 pandemic has shown that we don’t want our IT staff to be focusing on fixing ageing infrastructure, we want them to be ready to step in and tackle the bigger issues,” explained Reardon.

“Working with the right partner and seeing the big picture are incredibly important when considering a similar project,” said Reardon.

“HPE is highly regarded here in Tasmania, and they have local experts who appreciate our situation. Their close relationship with Data#3 was a real help when making such substantial changes, and their communication helped make sure we were all working towards the same goals. Both partners wanted to understand not just our current situation but where we wanted to go as a business, so that we could find a technology outcome that would match our business as we embark on this new phase. They understood what we wanted to do.”

The improved productivity of staff and improved performance were the highlights of the project, and Reardon concluded that the reduction in support tickets showed that a complete overhaul was the right choice.

“Where we once had 35 infrastructure related tickets per day, we now have barely a handful per week. We can rely on our applications even more now since the deployment of the new HPE SimpliVity solution, and having a foundation set on the HPE GreenLake ‘as a Service’ model, means we have confidence that no matter how our business evolves, we will be covered.”

¹ The As-a-service Playbook for CIOs and CTOs, HPE (2022) [Online] <https://www.hpe.com/au/en/pdfViewer.html?docId=a00106732&parentPage=/au/en/greenlake/overview&resourceTitle=The-As-a-service-Playbook-for-CIOs-and-CTOs&rpv=374549280>

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Data#3 and HPE

With over two decades of partnership experience, Data#3 is one of HPE's largest Platinum Partners in Asia Pacific. We have worked together on a broad range of projects for leading Australian organisations across education, government and the corporate sector. Leveraging HPE's broad range of solutions and services, as well as its renowned Aruba technology, customers leverage the partnership between Data#3 and HPE to accelerate their digital transformation and deliver the digital future.

HPE delivers 'Everything as a Service' (EaaS) with its pay-per-use HPE GreenLake platform. Production ready cloud services are managed for you by HPE and Data#3 which means you can free up resources, time and budget, to focus on what matters to your organisation.

Data#3



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