

A background image showing St Paul's Cathedral in London, with the Gherkin skyscraper visible in the distance. A red banner is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the title text.

# STEPHENSON HARWOOD BOOSTS PERFORMANCE AND CUTS COSTS WITH XSIGO

## Law firm achieves 4X faster performance and reduces infrastructure costs by 2/3

Stephenson Harwood is a full service international law firm based in London. With a staff of more than 700 and seven offices located across EMEA, APAC and Latin America, the firm has garnered recognition for broad geographic coverage, rapid growth and excellent client satisfaction.

### **BUSINESS CHALLENGES**

The firm's IT systems group provides a wide range of services including virtual desktops, back-office operations and data discovery services. Operating in two data centers positioned on either side of London City, the firm's rapid growth in demand for IT services caused the IT group to embark on a capacity expansion project. They had several major design goals in mind.

First, more bandwidth was a requirement across the board to accommodate the increased volume of projects and data. This would require a wide-scale migration to 10Gb Ethernet and

8Gb Fibre Channel. To minimize impact to the firm's global IT operations during this transition, it would be critical to reduce infrastructure disruption to the greatest extent possible.

Second, the IT group knew that overall efficiency was being sapped by points of congestion in the network infrastructure. Too much traffic was flowing through the existing Ethernet core, potentially requiring a costly upgrade. If traffic could be moved away from the core, it would both alleviate the bottlenecks and extend the life of the current core infrastructure.

Third, a data center relocation was planned for the near future. The complexity of the server I/O infrastructure, with 8 to 10 network and storage connections per device, made that move potentially time consuming and risky. A simpler, more easily migrated infrastructure would make the move much less painful.



### **OVERVIEW**

#### **INDUSTRY**

International Law Firm

#### **CHALLENGES**

- Migrate to 10G Ethernet and 8Gb Fibre Channel while minimizing service disruption
- Reduce loading on the Ethernet core network
- Simplify and de-risk a forthcoming premises move

#### **SOLUTION**

- Four Xsigo VP560 I/O Directors

#### **BENEFITS**

- 40X more usable bandwidth per server
- 66% reduction in storage and networking connectivity costs
- 80% less cabling
- Data center move completed in just 16 hours
- Remote management

“Xsigo virtual I/O delivered four times the I/O performance to our servers, and accommodated our Fibre Channel connections, all for about the same cost as a 10G Ethernet infrastructure alone.”

- Chris Petrie, IT Director, Stephenson Harwood

### THE SOLUTION

To address these challenges, Stephenson Harwood deployed four Xsigo VP560 I/O Directors. These devices consolidated the I/O infrastructure, allowing a single server connection to act as many, in the same way as a virtualised server enables one physical host to appear as multiple devices. Compared with the previous infrastructure, these devices provided several advantages that allowed the IT department to meet their objectives.

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“We now have far more capacity and flexibility. We look forward to flexing our infrastructure to meet the challenges of our dynamic and growing business.”

- Chris Petrie, IT Director,  
Stephenson Harwood

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### 4X FASTER I/O PERFORMANCE

First, the Xsigo devices' high-speed, 40Gb server connection provided 4X more bandwidth per server connection than was available with 10G Ethernet, and 40X more than the existing 1G connections. Chris Petrie, the firm's IT director,

commented, “We had planned to expand our use of 10G Ethernet, but found that Xsigo virtual I/O delivered four times the I/O performance to our servers, and accommodated our Fibre Channel connections, all for about the same cost as a 10G Ethernet infrastructure alone.” Furthermore, because the Xsigo device could be used with both the existing 1G and 10G networks, it was possible to facilitate a rolling upgrade, thus minimizing disruption.

Second, the new Xsigo solution allowed server-to-server traffic to travel entirely within the Xsigo environment, thus removing congestion from the existing Ethernet core. By offloading traffic that would otherwise have to travel through the Ethernet switching environment, the result was improved Ethernet performance and extended life for the existing gear.

Finally, the reduced infrastructure complexity simplified and de-risked the impending data center move. With an 80% reduction in the number of cables, the firm was able to dismantle and move their entire private cloud environment to the new premises and have it up and running in an amazing 16 hours.

### 66% COST SAVINGS AND LESS INFRASTRUCTURE COMPLEXITY

“Overall, Xsigo enabled a 66% cost savings when compared with a traditional I/O alternative,” Petrie said. “Xsigo reduced our equipment requirements by letting us re-use our existing 1G Ethernet infrastructure, and it cut the needed Fibre Channel

port count by 66%, reduced cabling by 80% and minimized the number of new network cards required. This is a remarkable set of benefits, all achieved from a single architectural decision.”

The simplified backend infrastructure and streamlined configuration tasks now allow the IT team to effortlessly deploy hosts with exacting I/O configurations, tasks that can now be performed from anywhere. With Xsigo, Stephenson Harwood administrators can remotely provision networks to any of the ESX servers within seconds using templates, significantly reducing operational costs.

### A MAJOR WIN FOR THE FIRM

In the end, Xsigo virtual I/O allowed the virtualized data center build-out to achieve 4X faster I/O performance and a 66% reduction in storage and networking connectivity costs. Petrie concluded, “We now have far more capacity and flexibility. We look forward to flexing our infrastructure to meet the challenges of our dynamic and growing business.”



The Xsigo VP780 I/O Director consolidates server I/O by replacing a server's multiple Ethernet and Fibre Channel interfaces with a single high-speed low-latency link.