

Case Study - Studio Four Architects

Client Profile

www.studiofourarchitects.com

Industry: Architecture

Staff: approx 30 staff

Locations: UK, South

Specialist Architects



Hampshire based architects Studio Four have been established for nearly twenty five years, with offices in Romsey, Winchester and Southampton, Studio Four works on design projects in sectors such as Healthcare, Education and Housing across the South.

Steady growth presented Studio Four with the requirement to find areas for improvement in efficiency – particularly between offices. They required an IT partner to radically overhaul their existing infrastructure.

The Problem

“We reached a point where our existing servers required renewal and to go with a more robust solution was going to cost a lot more than we were expecting” explains Peter Barnett, Director at Studio Four. *“We wanted a solution that would better unite our three offices.”*

As architects, Studio Four required enough computing power to run their graphically intensive 3D CAD applications smoothly. This required expensive hardware and represented a significant cost to the company. It also tied them to fixed workstations, hampering their mobility so they began to look for alternatives to a traditional in-house IT solution.

Studio Four considered a few options. *“We reviewed different alternatives to what we could do locally, we also looked into a hybrid server that was part cloud and part local.”* In the end, Studio Four decided to pursue a full cloud solution and chose to partner with entrust/IT.

The Solution

entrust/IT recommended a Hosted Desktop solution for Studio Four. This solution provides a full Windows Desktop in the cloud, with all customer data stored in ISO 27001 security certified UK datacentres. However, it quickly became clear that due to the graphically intensive nature of their CAD applications, something more than a standard desktop would be required. Over 9 months entrust/IT built and refined a Hosted Desktop service specifically designed for CAD-CAM applications, the 3D Desktop.

The Desktop incorporates Studio Four’s 3D CAD applications into a Microsoft desktop in the cloud, allowing their work files to be accessed anywhere, at any time, on virtually any device. Says Peter Barnett *“We are experimenting with the ability to take the desktop to a client’s site and run presentations as if we were at the office, using a tablet.”*

Using custom built, high performance servers with specialist GPUs for improved rendering, the 3D desktop allows complex 3D designs to be created and previewed in a virtual environment accessed from base model PCs in Studio Four’s offices.

“In a technical sense, the 3D desktop is an innovation that simply hasn’t been possible before.” comments Matthew Dodd, entrust/IT Technical Director. *“The technology required to create such a powerful virtual desktop is specialist and very complex. I know of no other cloud provider offering this type of service right now.”*

entrust/IT worked closely with Studio Four during a lengthy testing phase to iron out issues before full implementation and to continually hone the graphical performance to meet the exacting requirements of an architects practice. On “go-live” day, the entrust/IT team were on-site with Studio Four to ensure a smooth implementation process across all three locations.



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The Benefits

For Studio Four, the benefits have been obvious. *"We are no longer constrained by local hardware."* Says Peter Barnett. *"we now have a predictable IT spend, something we did not have before and we are also covered should equipment fail."*

Studio Four can now offer its employees a level of work freedom that previously was not possible. *"Although we promote and prefer people to work in offices, we now have the flexibility that our people can work from home, between offices or between desks in the same office without any hassle."*

Studio Four can now perform 3D rendering on base model PCs with all the processing work handled by the entrustIT cloud service. *"The performance is almost indistinguishable between local and virtual. I have noticed no delays in rendering and loading times since moving to a fully virtualised system."* Peter Barnett continues.

Furthermore, all entrustIT hosted desktops include unlimited access to our support services. Our UK based engineers are all Microsoft certified and most support issues can be solved over the phone. Allowing Studio Four to be back up and running quickly. *"The support along the way has been excellent."*

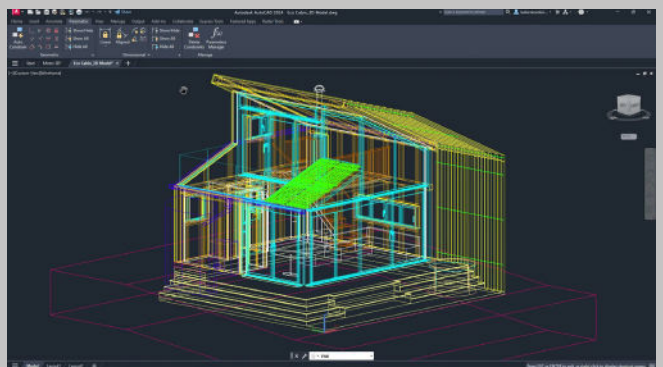


Summary

- **Predictable Costs** - Studio Four pay on a per user, per month basis and can scale up and down as required.
- **Remote Access** - 3D Desktop can be accessed on virtually any internet enabled device, from any location.
- **Security** - ISO 27001 data security from UK datacentres.
- **Reliability** - Fail-over server technology and 24/7 monitoring prevents issues from escalating and possibly impacting the business.
- **Communication** - information can now be accessed and exchanged throughout the business, ensuring further improvement in customer satisfaction.

"3D Design Desktop from entrustIT has allowed us to unite our three offices better and has provided a centralised location for all our data which works better for us. Now that our 3D CAD applications are accessed from the cloud, we can downgrade our existing local infrastructure, which saves us money long term. My IT time will move down to training software rather than sorting out problems"

Peter Barnett
Director
Studio Four Architects



Find Out More
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