

Clifford Chance partners with COLT for disaster recovery



Customer:

Clifford Chance

Sector:

Legal

Business:

One of the world's leading law firms

Challenge:

Implementing a disaster recovery platform

Services used:

LANLink, CPE Solutions, Voice Line, Internet Access

When Clifford Chance decided to put in place a disaster recovery platform for its European IT systems, it selected COLT to deliver and manage the low latency connectivity between its data centres.

Introduction

Clifford Chance is one of the world's leading law firms. Its 3,800 advisers provide domestic and international legal advice across the Americas, Asia and Europe. Clifford Chance is determined to be the leader of an elite group of international law firms and investing in managing knowledge and information is a key part of its strategy for achieving that goal. As Jean-Luc Levy, IT Director, Western Europe at Clifford Chance says, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is part of its core business.

Five years ago, Clifford Chance decided to consolidate its telecom suppliers across Europe to simplify management and reduce costs. Clifford Chance selected COLT to supply its voice and internet access services to a number of its European offices, as well as metropolitan data connectivity, because of COLT's pan-European network coverage and competitive pricing. Today, COLT is one of Clifford Chance's strategic telecom partners for Europe.

Business challenge

Having consistently reliable and secure access to email, document management and other IT systems is absolutely critical for Clifford Chance. In 2006, the firm decided

to implement a disaster recovery platform which would be designed around four 'hub sites' - data centres in London, Paris, Amsterdam and Frankfurt. Clifford Chance's systems are hosted in three of them and then continuously replicated to a single disaster recovery centre in Frankfurt. In this way, there would be little disruption to daily business in the event of a disaster at the original sites. The three data centres needed to be connected to the disaster recovery site by very low latency and high bandwidth data connections to make an instant switch over between sites possible.

In designing its disaster recovery platform, Clifford Chance decided to keep this network separate from its existing wide area network that carries day-to-day traffic between its offices and looked for a telecoms partner to deliver the data connectivity.

Why COLT?

Clifford Chance selected COLT to provide Ethernet connections between its four hub sites and manage the equipment at each location. As COLT owns and operates its own network across Europe, with deep fibre networks in all of the cities where the Clifford Chance data centres are located, it was

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Jean-Luc Levy,
IT Director, Western Europe,
Clifford Chance

able to directly connect each site and offer an end-to-end service with very low latency and high bandwidth.

Benefits

According to Jean-Luc Levy, COLT stands out from the competition because it offers a high quality of service at a competitive price and excellent customer care. “With its global account management, we always get good service from COLT. They have a real desire to invest in the relationship with us and that is very important for us,” he said.

The disaster recovery network has been functioning effectively since launch and Clifford Chance is now adding new applications, which also require ultra low latency, to it. For example, the firm has installed an IP PBX as part of its strategy to centralise all its European telephony to a single PBX and thereby reduce costs. The IP PBX is hosted and continuously replicated in two data centres across COLT’s network to ensure maximum reliability. “It is a challenge to find a provider who will guarantee ultra low latency in its SLA – COLT was able to deliver that and we are now running the IP PBX successfully across its network.”

What’s next?

Clifford Chance plans to continue rationalising its applications and data centres in Europe and worldwide to ensure its IT operation has maximum efficiency. It plans to operate just two centres in Europe - a main facility in London and a disaster recovery site in Frankfurt. “COLT is one of our strategic ICT partners in Europe and we intend to continue working closely together,” Levy concluded.