

Cortex wins business for Internet Solutions

South Africa's biggest ISP – InternetSolutions – is using Cortex software to differentiate its hosted services, automate the upselling of existing customers and pave the way for explosive growth in its value added partner channel.

When Internet Solutions (IS) was looking for a new 'cloud control panel' to manage the provisioning and administration of hosted software applications, it conducted an extensive evaluation process before selecting Cortex. The choice was an easy one, says Neil van Straaten, Product Manager for Messaging Services.

"Cortex is leaps and bounds ahead of everyone else – from an international perspective it's the de facto interface for hosted Exchange," he says.

"We are winning more business now, and Cortex is our biggest differentiator. Ease of use is the thing that clients can truly see and appreciate, and when we show clients the Cortex interface, they say Wow".

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EMS Cortex set Internet Solutions up to do its own migration from a legacy HMC/MPS provisioning engine, providing support as needed.

"Migration of our 800 client organisations and 40,000 user mailboxes is proceeding smoothly," Neil van Straaten says.



Cortex has 'removed all restrictions' on the growth of value added channel partners, says Neil van Straaten, Product Manager for Messaging Services, Internet Solutions – South Africa's largest ISP.

"There's no impact on client service, no need to sit down with the client and go through changes. We tell the client about the cutover, but the only thing that changes for them is the admin URL. Everything else just keeps working."

The sophistication of the Cortex client interface means Exchange functionality is not lost – even with multitenanted hosting.

Configuration is another area where Cortex has delivered big gains. Setting up desktops – with account settings and Outlook client etc – used to be manual. End users now log onto a user interface and download the configuration file, double click on it and run it – it's that simple. Internet Solutions can deploy hundreds of users, in branches spread across the country, in a single day.

Once clients are receiving one service, they deploy others by ticking a box. Clients upsell themselves, says Neil van Straaten.

"We've really noticed that once people are receiving hosted Exchange, they tend to sign up for additional services. Before Cortex, we had no ability for clients to have one interface to provision different services – now we do."

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Internet Solutions is launching Microsoft Office Communication Server (OCS) soon, and will provision and manage it using Cortex.

"Cortex has slashed deployment times by 70%. It's our sole management interface for both administrators and users," Neil van Straaten says.

He says Cortex's interface is simple enough for small companies with no IT department to understand, yet offers 'plenty of functionality' for large enterprise clients.

Once IS has provisioned the client, the user can do mass provisioning uploads themselves. On the IS side, hosted administrators are realising a 30 – 40% time saving in adding new clients.

"They can actually add a client in five or six clicks – it's only the paperwork that still takes time," Neil van Straaten says.

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***Neil van Straaten, Product Manager
for Messaging Services
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Dynamic manuals inside Cortex are pre populated with unique identity details for each client. The manual 'walks the client through' and automatically supplies any required technical identity information.

"The manuals are excellent – the client doesn't need to know any technical details at all," says Neil van Straaten.

He says his company is especially excited about the way Cortex has removed all growth restrictions for value added channel partners.

"Our resellers can provision a new client on the platform themselves, in five or six clicks. We just sit back and let resellers deploy clients as quickly as they possibly can. We want to set up everyone as a reseller and let them go wild with the market. It's very exciting for us." ■

Highlights

Summary

South Africa's largest ISP, Internet Solutions, uses Cortex as a single interface to provision and manage all hosted services. Cortex lets end users automatically configure their own desktops for speedy mass provisioning; client administrators use a tick box to enable additional services; and resellers provision new clients on the platform themselves in six clicks.

Original problem

- Multi-tenanted hosted Exchange had limits on the functionality that could be made available
- Setting up desktops was manual
- Different interface to provision each service

Business benefits

- 70% faster deployment times
- Interface has 'wow factor' for clients
- Migration process has no impact on client services
- Client administrators spend 50% less time on existing users
- Pre-populated dynamic manuals just 'make it work' for users
- Hosted administrators add new clients 30-40% faster
- Interface is simple enough for small companies, plenty of functionality for enterprise clients
- Resellers provision new clients themselves in minutes
- Single management interface for administrators and users
- Clients deploy additional services using a tick box
- No client training

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