



Centralized Data and Network Management Provides Bryan Cave LLP Strong Business Continuity and 50% Faster Site Launches

Overview

Location:

Founding office in St. Louis, Mo., plus 22 firm and affiliate offices in the Americas, Asia, Europe and the Middle East

Industry:

Legal services including business/transactional, litigation/dispute resolution and regulatory/tax

Customer Profile:

With more than 870 attorneys worldwide, Bryan Cave is known for strong legal expertise, a solutions focus and advanced technology.

Business Situation:

After developing a strong, proprietary disaster recovery and avoidance platform, Bryan Cave decided to outsource the related data and network management.

Solution:

Bryan Cave uses Lexis® Managed Technology Solutions.

Benefits:

- Secure, worldwide network availability, strong backup and virtually no downtime
- Reduced equipment costs, faster provisioning of hardware and better business continuity

Product Summary

Managed Technology Solutions

- Lexis® Technology Consulting
- Lexis® Network Services
- Lexis® Application & Systems Hosting

Bryan Cave LLP fosters a culture of collaboration. With more than 870 attorneys around the world, the firm is organized into client service groups and industry practice teams that offer legal counsel in diverse areas of interest to business and entrepreneurial clients. Regardless of geographic location, Bryan Cave professionals work together on behalf of clients using state-of-the-art communication technologies.

Clients count on the firm's strong legal expertise as well as its technology prowess. The Bryan Cave Information Services Group, headed by Chief Information Officer (CIO) Neeraj Rajpal, aligns core technology infrastructure, legal applications and support services with client needs.

Now, with the support of Lexis® Managed Technology Solutions, the firm meets or exceeds those needs while elevating system performance to new levels.

The Situation

Bryan Cave had already developed a strong, proprietary disaster recovery and avoidance platform to ensure that critical data would be secure in the event of a power failure, natural disaster or other disruptive event. But as CIO, Rajpal realized that the firm needed to take another significant step.

With a clear plan in mind and a directive from the firm's chair, Don Lents, Rajpal set out to centralize and outsource the firm's data and network management. This approach would complement the firm's disaster recovery advancements and:

- Reduce duplicative equipment and services among the many sites.
- Reduce equipment costs.
- Gain flexibility to set up new offices more quickly.
- Increase network uptime and access.
- Enable technology engineers at Bryan Cave to focus on legal applications, internal infrastructure and service needs without the distraction of network management issues.

Shortly after joining the firm, Rajpal realized he needed to outsource network management. The technology team at Bryan Cave "is not in the business of managing data centers and managing the network on a day-to-day basis," he said. "That's the first area where I wanted to partner with somebody."

The primary idea was to move equipment to an off-site, "hardened" facility (one that's protected against network security vulnerabilities), and use outsourced services to manage the network and data.

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Neeraj Rajpal
CIO, Bryan Cave LLP

Increased network uptime was a main objective. Said Rajpal, “The firm leadership was very, very clear as to where they wanted to be in terms of our peer group. We sought to be the leader of the pack in terms of developing technology. That included 24/7 network availability for the attorneys ... downtime in the legal market is not acceptable anymore.”

Before this initiative, much of the firm’s technology equipment was located in the firm’s founding office in St. Louis. In addition, each office had a private branch exchange (PBX) and servers for telephony, e-mail and documents. Said Rajpal, “Support people were everywhere. It was a management and administration nightmare from a service support and help desk standpoint. But all that has changed.”

The Solution:

Secure Hosting and “Virtually No Down Time”

Now Bryan Cave uses top-tier, high-availability LexisNexis® data centers in Ohio and in Dublin, Ireland, to house and operate the infrastructure for its disaster recovery and prevention platform. With LexisNexis network availability of 99.9 percent, Rajpal said, “We have tons of data there and virtually no downtime.”

Bryan Cave uses Lexis® Technology Consulting, Lexis® Network Services and Lexis® Application & Systems Hosting, which includes managed network services, redundant power, analysis, simulation, validation and service of chassis and systems, and much more.

Why did Bryan Cave select LexisNexis? “They had the experience and knowledge, as well as the reach and depth internationally,” said Rajpal. “Today, Bryan Cave uses Lexis as a ‘one-stop’ shop for their hosting and managed services business globally.”

Said Dave Medley, assistant director of infrastructure services at Bryan Cave, “My engineering group works closely with Lexis engineers on wide-area network design, failover, recovery, circuit provisioning, and equipment implementations. I view the Lexis engineers as being an integral part of my own staff.”

Centralized Equipment for Lower Costs and Better Business Continuity

LexisNexis houses the back-end telephony infrastructure for Bryan Cave. As a result, Medley said, the firm no longer has PBXs and large server deployments in each office, “a significant expense that has gone away.”

Since LexisNexis knows how to provision the types of circuits Bryan Cave needs, the firm has avoided potential problems. “Really key is the way we handle remote access from the Internet and wide-area networking,” said Medley. “We’re an all voice-over Internet protocol (VOIP) shop, so accurate circuit provisioning is essential to our operation. There can’t be anything wrong with them or it will definitely come out in the voice side of the network.”

This centralized telephony combines with the firm’s disaster recovery platform to provide distinct advantages. For example, if an office has a power issue or other disruption, engineers can isolate the affected office and redirect phone numbers into the data center so the phones continue working.

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Dave Medley
Assistant Director of Infrastructure Services,
Bryan Cave LLP

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Bryan Cave has a “Smart Client” setup, allowing local applications to interact with server-based applications through the use of Web services. It’s a mix of a Citrix® client (with secure access to centralized applications) and a thick client approach (networked with most resources installed locally) on the desktops and laptops. Said Rajpal, “Data is available anytime from anyplace. We could literally lose offices and the data is still there. And today, literally, you can just leave the office and go home or to the local coffee shop that has an Internet connection and you’re up and running. That’s the beauty of where we are today.”

Benefits:

Security, Availability, Cost Reduction, Business Continuity

As noted earlier, benefits to Bryan Cave have included secure, worldwide network availability, strong backup and virtually no downtime, as well as reduced equipment costs and better business continuity. Another advantage is faster provisioning of hardware. This enables the firm to be more nimble and to open up new sites quickly.

Quicker, Less Expensive Office Setup

Medley said that the clout LexisNexis and parent company Reed Elsevier have with telco carriers enables Bryan Cave to provision circuits and open new offices more quickly than ever before. “It’s almost unheard of for a law firm to provision a circuit within 30 days, but with LexisNexis we are doing that in the U.S. and in Europe,” said Medley.

Bryan Cave has been able to open new litigation support sites and offices within weeks, which averages overall to a 50% faster site launch. The firm set up sites in Milan, Italy, and Hamburg, Germany, and moved an office in Shanghai, China, to a new location—each in just six to eight weeks. Rajpal said the firm used to spend “a significant amount of money” opening and moving offices to meet emerging client needs. Now that cost is lower. He explained, “Once the data center is up and running, the infrastructure cost to open an office is minimal.”

Collaboration and Customization

To implement the solution, LexisNexis and Bryan Cave technology engineers collaborated on division of responsibility. “We told Lexis this is what we want to do and it’s got to work both ways. They were very open to that idea.” He added, “I think the engineering team at Lexis is a very superior engineering team. They worked with us to make sure we understood what they can offer and what we wanted them to do as well. So it was definitely a combined effort. The relationship really goes both ways.”

In addition, LexisNexis customized its support processes to meet the firm’s needs. For example, to accommodate support provided by the firm’s VOIP installation and infrastructure management provider in New York, LexisNexis revised its operations guide for Bryan Cave. With a customized problem escalation matrix, any Internet protocol telephony (IPT) issues are escalated to the New York vendor.

Said Medley, “It worked great for us. If we have an issue, we know it’s escalated properly and we are well aware of the issue right when it happens.”

With the custom support matrix in place, Rajpal said, “I am spoiled now because the response time has been phenomenal.”

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Freedom to Focus on Core Competencies

In addition, without the distraction of managing the data network on a day-to-day basis, the Information Services team at Bryan Cave can better focus on the application support work it needs to accomplish. “Now we can focus on our legal applications and ways to best support our professionals internally,” Rajpal said.

Recruiting Advantages

Bryan Cave’s strengthened technology capabilities help the firm in recruiting lateral hires. Rajpal said, “When you go to a firm or partner and ask them to come to Bryan Cave, technology always comes up. They want to know what we are using internally. When they hear us talk about what we have done and where we are going, it’s mind boggling. Where we are today has really become a driving force for people to say, ‘Hey, we want to come work for a firm which believes in technology and invests in it.’”

Creating a Long-Term Relationship

From the start of his selection process, Rajpal recognized the importance of working with a provider who understands how lawyers work—workflow that ranges from client development, practice management and research, to discovery and other data-intensive litigation work.

When Rajpal told other firm leaders he wanted to sign a deal with LexisNexis, “They understood that being a player in the legal market is very important,” he said. “I didn’t want to be just a very small player in the global offering of a larger IT vendor that didn’t have a legal-market focus. I wanted the support and the 24/7 response time that I’m getting from Lexis.”

Rajpal recommends going with a provider who has your long-term interests at heart. “You want someone who is going to be with you for the long haul,” he said. “I don’t use the word vendor. I use the word ‘partner’ because that’s, in essence, what it is.”

About LexisNexis

LexisNexis (www.lexisnexis.com) is a leading global provider of business information solutions to professionals in law firms, corporations, government, law enforcement, tax, accounting, academic institutions and risk and compliance assessment. A member of Reed Elsevier [NYSE: ENL; NYSE: RUK] (www.reedelsevier.com), the company does business in 100 countries with 13,000 employees worldwide.

About Lexis Managed Technology Solutions

LexisNexis provides secure, world-class system hosting and managed technology solutions designed specifically for law firms. Offerings include Lexis Application and Systems Hosting, Lexis® Data Lifecycle Management, Hosted Concordance® FYI™, Lexis Network Services, Lexis® Disaster Recovery and Lexis Technology Consulting. To learn more, contact your LexisNexis representative.

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