

## Customer Success Story

# ALLIED IRISH BANK

“The number of servers within our data centre was growing rapidly, and overheads associated with these physical machines were significant, particularly from a power and cooling perspective. Using virtualization, we have created a new strategy for supporting the bank in future, as well as providing business continuity support for all the applications. By adopting Virtualisation as a strategy we have seen significant cost savings and will continue to do so over the seven year life of the project.”

*Alan Pearson, Enterprise Client Services Manager  
Allied Irish Bank*

### Allied Irish Bank counts on VMware for cost savings and energy efficiency

Allied Irish Bank (AIB) is Ireland's largest financial institution with primary operations in Ireland, the United Kingdom, Poland and the United States. The bank's Republic of Ireland and Great Britain operations are based in Dublin, where two data centres host its Windows server estate. Overall AIB supports a number of central departments such as credit operations, finance and leasing, cards services, and home mortgages as well Group support and head office functions such as finance, Human Resources and IT.

In 2007, AIB had almost 600 Windows servers in place, supporting around 8,000 users. During the past two years, the bank had been forced to deploy between 100 and 200 new servers per year to keep up with demand for new services and applications across the business. This strategy had led to significant ongoing management overheads, as well as increasing hardware and power bills.

Alan Pearson and Graham Elliott of AIB were jointly responsible for managing the Windows server estate. “We recognized this growth in server numbers was unsustainable. Each physical machine took up valuable floor space, as well as adding to our management, power and cooling overheads,” said Pearson. “We also had a wide variety of disparate business continuity policies to maintain for our applications, which increased the management burden still further.”

To solve these problems, Pearson and Elliott looked to virtualize their data centres. Following a proof of concept project with partner Virtustream, AIB deployed VMware Infrastructure 3 Enterprise Edition across its Windows server estate. “The proof of concept gave us a great deal of information, and we completed a full business case for AIB to go fully virtual. With this data, and the help of Virtustream, we created a full virtual infrastructure platform for the bank,” said Pearson.

The bank consolidated 450 physical servers down to just 44 host machines, improving IT performance and cutting power bills. AIB also benefits from improved business continuity, as all applications hosted within virtual machines can be replicated between the bank's two data centres in real time. This approach provides AIB with one consistent way to protect its applications against downtime.

### Challenge

Reduce data centre footprint and power spending; reduce requirement for adding more physical servers to support business needs; improve business continuity across Intel-based applications

### Solution

Complete virtualization project based on VMware to shrink Windows server estate

### Results

Reduced number of servers from around 450 to 44; provide higher levels of availability across server estate; achieve significant cost savings over project life.

### VMware at Work

- VMware Infrastructure 3
- Virtual Center 2
- VMotion
- VMware HA
- VMware DRS
- VMware Converter
- VMware LifeCycle Manager

“Our virtualization implementation has provided the bank with a resilient, reliable data centre platform for the future. Virtual Center a single management platform that gives us an overview of how all our virtual machines are performing across our data centres.

This project also supports the bank’s corporate social responsibility activities. Using virtualization has reduced the Republic of Ireland and UK operations’. Overall, AIB saves around €470,000 in power costs, and has reduced its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by an estimated 2000 tons per year. “Following our decision to move to a virtual strategy in June 2007, we have not had to purchase a single physical server,” said Elliot.

“We have achieved significant consolidation ratios across our server estate, but we also benefit from increased business continuity. We ran a fail-over test, and moved 140 virtual machines from one production data centre to another without encountering any significant issues. Without virtualization, we would not be able to deliver this level of performance back to the bank.” **Graham Elliott, Windows Infrastructure Services Manager, AIB**

#### Results

- Overall cost savings on hardware, software licenses and management efficiencies over seven years
- No server hardware purchased since June 2007 – over twelve months
- Estimated power savings per year of €470,000
- Total reduction in carbon emissions for Eire and UK is an estimated 2000 tons
- Reduced number of physical servers from 450 to just 44

#### Deployment Environment

- HP DL585 servers with 2 dual-core processors; 32GB RAM
- Two EMC Symmetrix DMX-3 SANs, one at each data centre
- Vizioncore vRanger for back-up and restoration of virtual machines across sites
- Neverfail for Virtual Center for business continuity of management platform
- PlateSpin PowerConvert for moving physical applications into virtual machines

#### For more information:

Allied Irish Bank  
[www.aib.ie](http://www.aib.ie)

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