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Emma Lovatt, Technical Manager at Ticketline

Ticketline buys into Vialtus Solutions to boost performance



Ticketline is one of Europe's largest and most established ticket agencies, selling millions of tickets, for thousands of events every year. Ticketline offers a complete one-stop ticketing service allowing tickets to be purchased through city centre retail outlets, the Ticketline website and via the call centre, entirely supported by state of the art systems.

With 80 per cent of its sales coming from the web, Ticketline turned to Vialtus Solutions to provide a robust and reliable infrastructure to enable large volumes of traffic to access www.ticketline.co.uk, especially at peak times when popular events are announced. Since implementing a substantial hosting, access and security solution from Vialtus, Ticketline has seen numerous benefits including:

- Increased availability of the site for customers.
- Enhanced security of servers and customer data.
- A scalable solution to cope with peaks in demand.
- Advice and consultancy from a trusted and recognised supplier.

MOVING THE IT OUT

Previously hosted in-house at Ticketline's Manchester head office, the IT infrastructure was becoming inadequate for the growing number of online sales that the company was experiencing. Emma Lovatt, Technical Manager at Ticketline, explains, "With the increase in people buying online, our IT infrastructure was becoming out of date and we needed the expertise and advice of a dedicated provider in order to improve the systems."

Following the move to a small internet service provider, Ticketline and its customers experienced a poor and unreliable service. "After a bad encounter with another provider, we approached Vialtus as we knew they had a good reputation in the market and we had worked with them previously when we implemented Leased Lines. We had always received a good service so decided to expand our IT systems with them. 80 per cent of our sales come from the web, so it is vital for our business that we have a reliable infrastructure in place to allow customers access at all times."

EVENTFUL IT

Vialtus designed and implemented a managed hosting solution in its highly secure Server Bank™ data centre, located in Manchester. Ticketline introduced multiple web servers and implemented these alongside high availability F5 Big IP load balancers to ensure maximum uptime of the website. Load balancing works by enabling multiple servers to respond to visitors with the same content, depending on the load each server has at the time. Users are therefore not affected by demands placed on the server by other visitors.

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Redundant application and database servers were also deployed, with Cisco firewalls to provide maximum security for the sensitive information stored on the servers.

Lovatt continues, "We needed a highly redundant and secure solution that could cope with the spikes in demand that is obviously the nature of our business. When popular tickets go on sale, we need to guarantee that customers will have access to the site and be

able to complete their purchase. This is exactly what we have got from Vialtus; a reliable solution with all the elements that we need to keep our site running and ensure we can always provide the highest quality of service to customers."

The fully managed aspect to the solution means that any issues are dealt with immediately by the experienced team at Vialtus. "Having a solution that is managed 24/7x365 gives us complete peace of mind that an experienced staff member will spot any issues likely to cause us problems and resolve them straight away, even before we become aware of them, whilst we concentrate on our core business."

BOOSTING PERFORMANCE

Since deploying the Vialtus solution, Ticketline has seen a huge improvement in the reliability and performance of its website.

"There is so much redundancy built in to the Vialtus solution, we know we can rely on it to provide maximum uptime of the website. With many major events throughout the year, such as summer festivals and popular bands touring, our site naturally experiences peaks in traffic at various times. With this solution in place, we have seen a major improvement of the website availability and the customer feedback has been excellent," adds Lovatt.

Security is of paramount importance to Ticketline as large amounts of sensitive data and customer information is stored on the servers. In order to protect this, Vialtus Solutions segregates the web servers from other applications to prevent hackers stealing Ticketline's critical information.

"The team at Vialtus have been fantastic," continues Lovatt. "What has been particularly beneficial for us is the consultancy and advice that they have provided us with. The engineers are extremely helpful and our account manager is experienced and highly knowledgeable – we couldn't ask for a better service."

LOOKING AHEAD

Ticketline is currently seeing increased sales month on month and plans to expand its IT infrastructure further still in the near future. "We are continuously looking at new ways to provide extra services to our customers, for example our seating plans on our website are specific to the event so the customer can be 100 per cent sure where they are seated. In order to do this, we obviously need the IT systems in place and will be working with Vialtus to identify ways we can enhance our infrastructure further still," concludes Lovatt.



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