

# Big bang theory improves IT at Privacy watchdog

## Customer

The Privacy Commission, the independent crown entity guarding Kiwis' privacy.

## Business issues:

Outdated technology coming to - and in some cases past - its lifespan.

## Solution:

A system overhaul, including a complete server infrastructure replacement and partial PC fleet replacement, and upgraded software.

## Outcome:

Reduced maintenance costs, improved staff morale, faster, more efficient systems.



Privacy Commissioner  
Te Mana Matapono Matatapu

## Privacy first

When New Zealanders feel their privacy has been breached, they turn to the Privacy Commission to help out.

The independent crown entity was set up in 1993 to administer the Privacy Act 1993, which applies to almost every person, business and organisation in New Zealand, and sets out 12 principals that guide how personal information can be collected, used, stored and disclosed.

Employing 20 staff in Wellington and 10 in Auckland, the agency's role includes investigating complaints about alleged privacy breaches as well as examining the impact of technology and new legislation on privacy, monitoring data matching between government departments, developing codes of practice for specific industries or sectors and running educational seminars and workshops.

## Outdated technology

Gary Bulog, Privacy Commission general manager, says the Commission's technology was outdated. Servers were on extended warranties about to expire, and warranties for the vast majority of desktop computers were already out by a year or more. Microsoft is ceasing support next year for the Windows XP operating system the Commission's desktops are based on, and the main software - Microsoft Office 2003 and their Objective electronic document management system - needed upgrades.

Gary says it was getting to the stage where there was "the odd meltdown every couple of months. It wasn't critical, but it was getting there."

So why the wait to upgrade? The promise of improved purchasing power under the All-of-Government contracts, set up last year and providing a single supply agreement between the crown and approved suppliers, meant the agency was keen to hold off upgrading until the contracts were in place.

At the same time, the organisation was operating under 'severe financial constraints' and expects to be so for some time. As such, Gary says he was looking for a solution that would last the distance - at least for the next five years. "When you've got a budget of \$3.4 million it takes a while to accumulate depreciation to do a major upgrade like this," he says.



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## The big bang - Replace it all

The Privacy Commission has worked with LANWorx for more than 10 years. With no in-house technology team, LANWorx provides the IT services and advice for the Commission.

So it was to LANWorx that Gary looked for guidance on what software and services would be best for the Privacy Commission and, ultimately, to do essentially a site overhaul.

Gary is a proponent of the 'big bang theory' of replacing everything in one hit, rather than adding and subtracting hardware and software in smaller stages, something he believes can cause more problems. With that in mind, LANWorx did a complete server infrastructure replacement, with new Windows, Exchange and SQL servers, along with a partial PC fleet replacement. All hardware over three years old – about 90% of the Commission's hardware – was replaced. All workstations were built using Windows Deployment Services. This reduced the cost of deployment and ensured that there was a Standard Operating Environment.

The site overhaul also included an upgrade to Windows 7 and Office 2010, and an upgrade for Objective. While LANWorx is not responsible for the Objective solution, Gary notes the company 'handles elements such as how it impacts into the server'.

"They were responsible for liaising with Objective. I expect LANWorx to be principally responsible for maintaining our system."

## Happy staff, better systems

Gary says one of the benefits of all-new hardware, was that LANWorx could preload the software on both servers and desktops. The servers were then racked alongside the existing servers to run in tandem while bugs were ironed out.

On the PC side, staff went home on a Friday and came back on Monday to brand new machines, running new software, with no interruption to the office.

He says the result of the upgrade was an immediate morale boost for staff. "They came in to new, faster machines with nice big 22-inch screens where there had been 14-inch screens. And they like the new software – many of them had been using it in their personal lives already.

"There are much better response rates across the network, and bandwidth is being managed much better. The need to reboot has been lessened a lot and the integrity of the system has been improved."

The upgrade has also seen a reduction in the cost of maintaining the system, with patchup work not covered by warranties, no longer required.

As an added benefit, Gary says LANWorx included virtualisation and robust backup and redundancy in the servers. "If one system goes down, another can be up and running virtually straight away, which was virtually unheard of before. I hope we never have to use it, but it's good to know it is there."

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Privacy Commission general manager

## About LANWorx

LANWorx is an IT services company, providing the full range of software, hardware, system management services and strategic IT advice to SME organisations.

We help your organisation to be its best, by focussing on your core business at maximum productivity, while LANWorx ensures the right IT systems are always in place.

This is based on our strong technical competence, a proactive and common-sense approach, and an absolute commitment to delivery.

We understand IT is a tool to help people do their job better, and that tool should be easy and painless to use. Our promise is always to put people before IT.

LANWorx. People before IT.

**Contact us today for a chat about how we can put people before I.T. in your business.**

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