

CASE STUDY

COMPANY
English Heritage

INDUSTRY
Charity

THE PROBLEM
Integrated IT systems were required to support continued growth, whilst increasing efficiencies and saving costs in the face of pressure to become self-sufficient.

THE SOLUTION
Cloud hosted ERP and streamlined ticketing and EPOS systems across hundreds of sites, backing up to a unique configuration and with the power to handle spikes in demand.



English Heritage are renowned for their management of over 400 of the UK's most historic buildings, monuments and sites, five of which are world heritage sites. Additionally, English Heritage run the London Blue Plaque scheme, with 900 unique plaques across the city and are the biggest provider of heritage education in the UK.



ENGLISH HERITAGE

English Heritage needed an IT system which would integrate various elements of the organisation, and support its continued growth. With governmental pressure to become financially self-sufficient by 2020, they want to streamline the organisation, increase efficiency and save costs.

K3 Retail, part of the K3 Cloud, Hosted and Managed Services (K3), were chosen to implement Microsoft Dynamics NAV ERP to aid English Heritage in meeting these goals.

Part of the implementation was to integrate Merac as a ticketing solution for English Heritage's

"K3 should be proud of the level of trust they've built at English Heritage, it's thoroughly deserved."

retail arm, as this could meet the complex demands of its visitor centres. Merac's ability to accommodate a broad range of ticketing services and as a dedicated EPOS system for the leisure industry made them a great choice for this project. K3 Retail introduced K3 to provide the necessary hosting infrastructure.

With hundreds of sites and users scattered across England, it was clear from the outset that cloud hosting was the sensible option, and with the organisation placing its trust in a single system, resilience was a priority.

K3 proposed a highly available cloud hosting solution with redundancy across two data centres with data backup to a third and a service level agreement for recovery of four hours in the event of disaster.

But with hundreds of venues all transacting business on a daily basis, the timely transfer of data was a potential stumbling block. To overcome the issue, the majority of venues store transactions locally and then transfer information to the cloud each evening.

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For a handful of the larger venues, the network infrastructure between the site and the data centre included a failover line allowing transaction data to be relayed close to real time.

Once all the data has been passed from the venues to the hosted NAV environment, the day's information is also transferred to English Heritage's accounting software, giving the organisation exceptional visibility.

English Heritage have been particularly impressed with K3's proactivity in finding and resolving any potential or current system grumbles well before they become a problem. This ensures users get a reliable and efficient service whenever they log on.

Kevin Churchill, Information Systems Support Manager at English Heritage is keen to point out the proactive nature of the support K3 provides.

"K3 take the worry away which allows me to concentrate on other things. 99% of the time, you wouldn't notice they are there, but we know the support team are just a phone call away, whenever required.

"I find them very accommodating as they are more than happy to take the time to explain things, making for a great customer experience. It's also very refreshing to be able to talk to a named contact at K3 and not just feel like a number in a support queue.

"The K3 team has established excellent relationships with English Heritage and we feel reassured by being able to put a face to a name. It really reinforces premium service they deliver so well."

Craig Bradshaw, Senior Account Manager at K3 agrees that a strong working relationship can reap dividends. "We have developed an in-depth knowledge of English Heritage, so if they come to us with a problem, we are very well placed to understand how we can quickly resolve it."

With seasonal spikes in demand, English Heritage's infrastructure has been built to cope. Kevin explains, "The busiest time of the year for us is the peak summer period – particularly the school summer holidays and August Bank holiday. This means we will have more users accessing the server at once, which could put the system at risk of becoming overloaded. However, we've never come close to this happening as we rely on K3's preventative maintenance to flag this up and offer a solution before anything like that were to happen.

