

# Energis Squared

Rapid ASP Implementation Provides a Platform for Growth



Leading eBusiness Service Provider *Energis Squared* (formerly Planet Online), wanted a state of the art ASP platform when it set out to establish, quickly, a successful presence in this rapidly growing market.

Compaq, in association with its alliance partners Microsoft and Cisco, and *Energis Squared*, developed the new ASP platform on a beta release of Microsoft Exchange 2000, in just 4 months.

Running on 70 Compaq *ProLiant*s at the *Energis Squared* data centre, the ASP system now forms part of the largest server farm in Europe.

By enabling individuals and large businesses to communicate easily and relatively cheaply, the Internet has spawned all manner of entrepreneurial ventures. One of the most significant business opportunities to emerge - with major implications for all software developers - is the hosting of Web sites, databases and now applications. Application Service Provision (ASP) has created a new and highly effective software business model. It enables all enterprises, both small and large, to make significant reductions in their operating costs.

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**Fiona Pearl**  
Partner Manager  
of Energis Squared

## Over one thousand servers

In the UK, the most well known and respected of hosting operations is that run by Energis Squared. Part of the Energis group of companies, Energis Squared regularly tops the customer satisfaction ratings and for the past two years it has won the Best Internet Service Provider award.

An ever increasing number of companies now have their Web sites hosted by Energis Squared in its Leeds data centres, Europe's largest high-security Web farm. These facilities host more than 10,000 websites for business customers, over 1,000 customers on dedicated servers.

Energis Squared provides hosting services for some of the UK's most heavily accessed commercial websites including Freeserve, Jungle.com, Microsoft, Barclays Bank and over 20 of the top football sites.

These sites receive in excess of ten million hits every day, and Energis Squared handles over 500,000 email packages per hour.

This is the cutting edge of the Internet.

## No time to lose

Application Service Provision is a very specialised and more complex version of hosting. Centralised facilities, with shared resources and remote access, offer businesses

the benefits of a high performance, managed IT infrastructure with the latest applications.

It's a type of business made possible by the Internet, and it was something that Energis Squared wished to develop rapidly. "We were one of the first into the Web hosting market," says Fiona Pearl, Partner Manager for Energis Squared, "and we wanted to seize the initiative in the ASP area. We wanted a very rapid deployment, enabling us to leapfrog competitors offering the older version of Microsoft Exchange. This is where the relationship with Compaq came in"

The nascent ASP market continually increases in pace. To gain and to maintain competitive advantage, Energis Squared had not only to establish the ASP service quickly, but also had to implement a leading edge solution that will provide a reliable platform for growth.

"From my perspective," says Pearl, "the Compaq, Microsoft, Cisco alliance was the logical partner for this project. We already have the largest known Cisco network in Europe. We have the highest level of Microsoft certification, we have over a thousand Compaq industry standard servers and we'd already worked very successfully with Compaq Services on a large e-commerce programme."



Energis *Squared* had the market knowledge, the vision, and the datacentres, but wanted to take advantage of additional skills and experience to make it all come together.

The implementation of an ASP platform is technically very complex, yet this project was successfully completed in just four months. Between them the teams from Compaq, Energis *Squared* and the alliance partners had all the necessary project management, application development, integration and networking skills. And Compaq's experience of joint projects enabled them to make the best use of the available expertise, and develop the ASP platform very rapidly.

Compaq has unsurpassed knowledge of the Microsoft environment. Microsoft has just named Compaq as Global Services Partner of the Year and in addition to being a member of the Windows 2000 and Exchange 2000 Joint Development Programs, it is the Worldwide Prime Integrator for Windows 2000 and Exchange 2000. As well as leading the project on behalf of the alliance, Compaq drove the design, implementation and documentation of the ASP environment.

### New platform

The Microsoft Exchange 2000 platform had not been released when the project was initiated but Energis *Squared* chose to

develop their platform in tandem with the development of Exchange 2000. "As a prime integrator for Exchange 2000, Compaq really understand the technology," adds Pearl. "Their combined skills shortened the development cycle and ensured that we obtained optimum performance from the Windows 2000 platform."

Using Exchange 2000 enabled the team to build the whole platform on Windows 2000. This had a number of benefits. In particular, it allowed them to use the Windows 2000 Active Directory Service, which stores and uses profile information.

The Windows 2000 Active Directory Service makes it possible to consolidate different types of application-based directories. This means there is a single management point for most applications, and that directly reduces training, setup, configuration and administration costs.

Windows 2000 and Exchange 2000 share the same directory, for example, and set-up changes are reflected globally across the operating system and any resident applications.

### Compaq Microsoft Cisco alliance

The Compaq, Microsoft, Cisco alliance enabled Compaq to call upon the most highly skilled people in each organisation, and design and test what is probably the world's most advanced Windows 2000 hosted office and mail system.

Commenting on the relationship between Energis *Squared* and the alliance team, managing director, John Beaumont, said, "Compaq's e-business services capability and the combined strength of all four organisations ensured that we made rapid progress, enabling Energis *Squared* to achieve stringent deadlines. Compaq's expertise and experience in large-scale Windows 2000 projects was central to our choice of supplier."

Energis *Squared* is now set to provide a range of ASP services running on over 70 Compaq *ProLiant* servers, with a high performance Compaq StorageWorks Storage Area Network (SAN), and linked by Cisco networking technology. Popular applications, such as the Microsoft Office suite, provide the core facilities and users then download their own corporate templates to customise the applications. Energis *Squared* plans to build on the success of this initial step to offer even more complex and specialised applications, and introduce innovative ways of connecting and managing their customers client systems.

"We want to make sure that our customers' complex needs are met, and that demands an advanced ASP platform and an ability to leverage the best services from our partners," says Fiona Pearl, "One of the excellent things about this project was the openness of our partners and their ability to get things right."

## Project Summary

- **Business Requirement:** an ASP solution to serve businesses throughout Europe
- **Technical Requirement:** Multiple networked servers providing a hosting service based on Microsoft applications
- **Strategic Requirement:** Rapid deployment to minimise time to market
- **Hardware Solution:** 70 Proliant Servers linked by Cisco switches
- **Software Solution:** Microsoft Windows 2000, Microsoft Exchange 2000, Microsoft Office applications
- **Compaq Services:** Project management, design, integration and rapid implementation of ASP environment
- **Partners:** Microsoft and Cisco
- **Success Factors:** Compaq was selected to lead the project because:
  - it had a credible strategy for implementing the service successfully within the required timescale
  - it had the technical competence to implement a complex ASP solution
  - only worldwide prime integrator for Windows 2000 and Exchange 2000

## Why ASP?

- ASP is attractive to companies of all sizes as it gives them immediate access to a broad range of software applications. In effect they are renting rather than buying software. And as it runs on remote servers, it requires a much simpler local IT infrastructure, which also reduces support costs.
- Many smaller businesses find they can manage without an IT function, and as they grow they can draw on the skill and knowledge of their service provider's technology group.
- Using an ASP service enables managers to focus on the core business. It eliminates problems such as software integration and improves cash flow.