

Vantage Secures Microsoft Lync For Scottish Solicitors MacRoberts

macROBERTS

For solicitors, unified communications (UC) offers an efficient and effective means of communication.

The ability to federate with clients, share documents over a video conference, exchange ideas in a quick instant message (IM) and even work remotely, can dramatically improve productivity. However, the benefits of UC can be quickly offset if care is not taken to meet the security, management and compliance issues created when deploying a UC platform. So when MacRoberts LLP, one of Scotland's pre-eminent commercial law firms, decided to rollout Microsoft OCS and subsequently upgrade to Microsoft Lync it turned to Actiance and reseller partner Gradian Systems for guidance.

With offices in both Glasgow and Edinburgh, MacRoberts provides a full range of legal services to leading UK and international businesses, financial institutions, public sector organisations and private individuals. As part of a planned relocation of its Glasgow office to the top four floors of the newly built Capella in the heart of the city's financial district, MacRoberts decided to take the opportunity to implement a UC platform. However, as Robert Crichton, Director of IT Services at MacRoberts explains, they knew there were some risks that needed negating before they rolled out the Microsoft UC platform.

"We have an extensive corporate data and IT infrastructure that is critical to our business. Any organisation must take data leakage seriously, but for a firm of solicitors it's more than a loss of reputation at stake," says Crichton. "Lawyers exchange documents all the time. In order to ensure compliance and fulfil our legal obligations we need to be able to prove irrefutably what was exchanged, who with and when, regardless of the medium used. If an investigation was launched into a particular document and we couldn't easily demonstrate who had access, it may weaken our client's position and that's simply not acceptable."

Whilst Microsoft's UC platform is extremely effective in delivering UC, it did not natively provide the capabilities to meet all of today's security, compliance and legislative requirements defined by MacRoberts. The law firm needed to ensure that the implementation of a UC did not open up its IT infrastructure to the threat of malware coming in or the risk of data leaking out. In addition, MacRoberts wanted to be certain that only authorised applications were used and that services such as public IM (Yahoo, AOL etc) were blocked.

In conversation with Gradian, one of MacRoberts preferred technology suppliers, Crichton mentioned some of his concerns in the impending rollout of OCS. Gradian has provided MacRoberts strategic advice for the last five years, as part of their service as secure messaging and compliance specialists independent security consultants. A long time partner of Actiance, Gradian recommended that Vantage, the award winning security, management and compliance platform from Actiance be considered as it protects not just UC platforms such as Microsoft OCS and Lync, but all real-time communications used within an organisation - from presence and instant messaging to conferencing and voice.

"I'd go so far as to say that we wouldn't have rolled out OCS or Lync without Vantage; Vantage complements Microsoft Lync by providing us with the necessary control to ensure that our data remains secure and that we have a full audit trail of all conversations and files exchanged."

Robert Crichton
Director of IT Services
MacRoberts

AT A GLANCE

Vantage™ ensures security, management and compliance for Real-time and Unified Communications – from presence and instant messaging to conferencing and voice.

KEY FEATURES

- Support for Microsoft Lync and OCS, IBM Sametime, Cisco Unified Presence 8, and all major public IM networks
- OCS CAC controls for resource allocation
- "Poison Room" policies for ethical walls enforcement, archiving and reporting in Microsoft Live Meeting
- Compliance, Security and Control for Skype
- Support for BlackBerry PIN and SMS messaging
- Support for the import of Bloomberg, Pivot, Thomson Reuters Messenger, and YellowJacket data
- Support for real-time monitoring of Reuters IM traffic, including chat rooms, file sharing, and screen capture sharing
- Compliance disclaimers, ethical walls, archiving and auditing for OCS Group Chat
- Prevent data leakage over IM and UC platforms through content filtering and regular expressions
- Integrate with corporate directory services to utilize and control communications at global, group and employee level
- Virus scanning of file transfers using existing AV implementation or via Sophos anti-virus module
- Block zero-day IM-based worm and virus attacks
- Guaranteed 100% accurate binary archiving of all IM for compliance or e-Discovery
- Integrate with Actiance Insight for analytics and reporting

Vantage is the only platform providing security, management and compliance controls to support Microsoft Lync and provides granular security, policy controls and compliance features that enables organisations to manage their UC platform alongside publicly available real-time communications and other messaging systems. Vantage helps protect against data leakage by detecting, then either alerting or blocking content in all real-time communications, including file transfers. Further protection is provided by the blocking of malicious URLs and Zero Day worms.

After an initial evaluation of Vantage with Microsoft OCS, MacRoberts implemented the combined solution and shortly afterwards upgraded to Microsoft Lync – becoming the first Scottish organisation to roll out Lync.

“There were two aspects about Vantage that impressed us straight away. Firstly was the granular control that it provided enabling us to easily authorise who had access to which services and secondly was the depth of reporting,” says Crichton. One of the reasons we wanted to introduce UC into the firm was to enable us to federate with our clients, enabling a more productive and efficient collaborative environment where meetings could take place without leaving the desk.

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“Vantage has enabled us to achieve this without exposing ourselves to the risk of data leakage or inbound threats such as malware and has also provided us with the reporting tools to ensure we are using Microsoft OCS to its best advantage. If you’re not an organisation that has already embraced the idea of IM or video conferencing, then UC can be a bit of cultural change. The analytics and reporting in Vantage enables us to see who is using UC to its full potential and shows us where perhaps some individuals need a little more encouragement to use it. In addition, the reports help us demonstrate the time saved by not leaving a desk to go for unnecessary meetings.”

Vantage’s comprehensive analytics enables MacRoberts to easily visualise adoption and usage trends and allows for key metrics to be measured, including Live Meeting and voice and video usage, which can be translated into savings on travel, hosted conferencing, and telephony costs.

When Vantage was first deployed, MacRoberts had implemented Microsoft OCS R2. Since then, the firm has upgraded to Microsoft Lync. Crichton says that Vantage works well on both platforms and that there was no problem in upgrading. Moving to Lync has now enabled MacRoberts to consider its next step in its communications strategy, which includes Blackberry Messenger - another communications medium supported by Vantage.

“UC is an important part of our communications strategy and key in helping us collaborate more closely with our clients,” concludes Crichton.

About MacRoberts

MacRoberts is one of Scotland’s pre-eminent law firms. Our clients include leading UK and international businesses, financial institutions, public sector organisations and private individuals. Everything we do is driven by our objective to secure the success of our clients. It is a lasting statement of what we are about and how we go about our business. We provide the full range of specialist legal services in a team-based environment, working hard for our clients to deliver the very best results for them.

For more information visit: <http://www.macroberts.com>

About Actiance, Inc.

Actiance enables the safe and productive use of Unified Communications and Web 2.0, including blogs and social networking sites. Formerly FaceTime Communications, Actiance’s award-winning platforms are used by more than 1600 customers for the security, management and compliance of unified communications, Web 2.0 and social media channels. Actiance supports or has strategic partnerships with all leading social networks, unified communications providers and IM platforms, including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter AOL, Google, Yahoo!, Skype, Microsoft, IBM and Cisco.

Actiance is headquartered in Belmont, California. For more information visit <http://www.actiance.com>. Follow Actiance on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/actiance> or call 1-888-349-3223

A-CS-006-MACROBERTS-0311