



About Assimil8

Assimil8 is a market leader in business analytics, financial reporting, planning & forecasting, and data warehousing. Using world-class IBM Cognos software as a base, and following an ethos of client collaboration and empowerment, Assimil8 is driving forward innovative, ground-breaking techniques such as Geo-spatial Business Analysis and Cloud based systems.

Overview

Business Challenge

Assimil8's business intelligence solutions enable organisations across a broad range of industry sectors to make better and faster decisions. As companies' appetite for business analytics has increased in recent years, Assimil8 has turned its attention to providing analysis and reporting on demand, through a series of hosted systems and services. Until 2012 it had used IBM SmartCloud to deliver these solutions. As the market opportunity grew however, Assimil8 felt it needed a more sophisticated platform so that it could develop new options for its customers.

Solution

IBM proposed its SoftLayer global cloud infrastructure as the basis for delivering business-grade processing, storage and applications performance on demand. In addition to a vast, global data centre estate, the platform offers virtualised and dedicated bare-metal infrastructure which can be made available at high speed and in a range of different configurations. Complementing IBM SoftLayer's global footprint is the availability of local data centre facilities in Europe and the UK. This allows Assimil8 to provide assurances to its clients about where their data will be held.

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Assimil8 extends business analytics on demand to companies of all sizes

The multiple provisioning options offered by IBM SoftLayer's sophisticated cloud infrastructure opens up new possibilities for the company and its clients

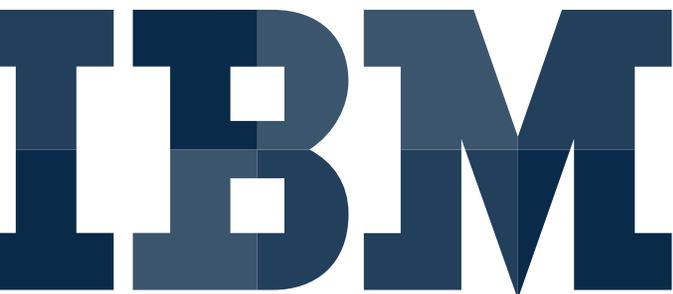
Assimil8 is a specialist in business intelligence solutions. These enable organisations across a broad range of industry sectors to produce the insights they need to make better and faster decisions, improve performance and exploit new market opportunities.

As companies' appetite for business analytics has increased in recent years, Assimil8 has turned its attention to providing analysis and reporting on demand, through a series of hosted systems and services. Until 2012 the company had used IBM SmartCloud to deliver these solutions. As the market opportunity grew however, Assimil8 felt it needed a more sophisticated platform so that it could develop new options for its customers.

"We were finding that clients increasingly wanted to outsource their business analytics and associated infrastructure - as a service," explains Kevin Hurd, Assimil8's Cloud Services Director. Identifying a new opportunity for the growing business, and a way of differentiating the company in an increasingly competitive market, Assimil8 had arrived at a crossroads.

A platform to support new business

Having gone as far as it could with IBM SmartCloud, Assimil8 set out to explore alternative cloud platforms to see if they could form the basis of a broader portfolio of solutions and services for its clients.



Business Benefits

- In contrast to the 3-6 months it might take an IT department to launch a new business analytics capability, Assimil8 can have a proof-of-concept up and running within an hour.
- Assimil8 can upgrade clients' hosted systems in mere hours, where other cloud providers might take days or even weeks to add capacity, causing a delay for users.
- The different hardware and software configuration options enable Assimil8 to offer unprecedented choice to clients, including small-scale SaaS-based business analytics solutions for a low monthly charge.
- Assimil8's cloud-based business has contributed considerable new revenue over 18 months, and new opportunities are opening up all the time.
- IT directors are impressed with the performance assurances for IBM SoftLayer, as well as IBM's commitment to investing in the platform. Line-of-business managers are attracted to the rapid delivery of new capabilities.

Service Components



IBM, as a strategic technology partner of Assimil8, proposed SoftLayer - its newly acquired global cloud infrastructure. This delivers robust, business-grade processing, storage and applications performance on demand. In addition to a vast, global data centre estate, IBM SoftLayer offers both virtualised and dedicated bare-metal infrastructure which can be made available at high speed and in a range of different configurations.

“The resilience of the platform was a real differentiator, and the scope to offer different deployment options was vast – at least 10 times what we’d had before,” Kevin says. “It meant we could offer a more robust and bespoke range of products and services.

“The bare metal option allows us to allocate dedicated physical servers integrated with virtualised platforms, creating hybrid scenarios to suit different needs,” he notes. Databases containing sensitive, competitive data and requiring guaranteed performance levels can be allocated their own hardware, for example, and additional capacity can be brought online quickly as requirements peak.

“We can provision rapid deployment,” Kevin says. “We provide a lot of infrastructure on demand, and it’s very easy to add more servers on demand thanks to the IBM SoftLayer APIs [application programming interfaces], and the variety of pre-existing, saved images we can choose from - for example, Cognos environments and so on.”

Armchair analytics for all

Demand for Assimil8's solutions and services comes from a diverse range of clients. The company can amply meet these needs - and more - thanks to the flexibility and performance of the IBM SoftLayer cloud infrastructure.

In the retail sector, Assimil8 provides a client with cloud-based Cognos business analytics as a means of delivering timely management information, including performance reporting. Energy Savings Trust (EST), the energy efficiency advisor, uses Assimil8's cloud-based services to deliver insights about energy consumption to private and public sector organisations.

“Having the IBM SoftLayer brand behind us is very important. Our partnership has been very fruitful. We have a very good platform to build on, and some great references. IBM’s investment in SoftLayer is very visible, and gives our clients ongoing reassurance that they’ve made the right choice.”

- Kevin Hurd, Cloud Services Director, Assimil8

“The applications cover a wide spectrum,” Kevin says. “EST is using the cloud to provide geospatial reporting - so local authorities can determine the potential benefits of various energy savings schemes.”

Branching into entry-level services

For Assimil8 as the facilitator of all of these new opportunities, business is booming. “We used to focus primarily on the business analytics, but now we can provide the entire platform – the infrastructure which enables all of this,” Kevin explains.

“This means we can be very competitive. It also means we can offer our own online solutions – for example software as a service [SaaS] and hosted applications, if a company just wants to equip itself for 20-30 users on demand for a monthly price. That’s something we didn’t offer before.”

Over the last 18 months, opportunities like these have added substantial growth in new revenue to Assimil8’s UK business. “For a small company, that’s impressive,” Kevin says. “Going forward we expect more of the same.”

Underpinning this potential is IBM SoftLayer, a cloud infrastructure that Assimil8 believes would be difficult to match. “We searched far and wide when we were looking for a robust cloud platform and nothing came close,” he claims.

“IBM SoftLayer guarantees 100% network uptime and, certainly in the last two years, we’ve experienced no downtime at all. The support is second to none too. It’s available 24 hours a day, via webchat and Twitter as well as standard call-logging, and the response times are phenomenal – often within minutes,” Kevin says.

“In the rare event that there is an issue, they typically notify us before we’ve even realised,” he adds. “All of this gives us huge confidence. Also, they have a vast infrastructure across numerous countries with very impressive network upload speeds between them. That’s vital for failover.”

“For business analytics we’re really setting ourselves apart... And the beauty of what we’re offering via the cloud is that we can get solutions to market very quickly for customers. In contrast to the 3-6 months it might take an IT department, we can have a proof-of-concept up and running within an hour.”

Local presence, lightning turnaround

Complementing IBM SoftLayer’s global footprint is the availability of local data centre facilities in Europe and the UK. This allows Assimil8 to provide assurances to its clients about where their data will be held, something that can be important for regulatory compliance reasons.

Having the bare metal option alongside virtualised system provision is another major advantage of the IBM SoftLayer cloud platform, which is further boosted by a high speed of deployment, he adds. “Using self-service facilities, we can add memory or disk capacity within hours,” he explains. “By contrast, other cloud providers might take days or even weeks to perform an upgrade, causing a delay for their users. This wouldn’t be acceptable for us, as our clients’ infrastructure needs change on almost a daily basis. We recently upgraded a client’s network capacity from 100 Mbps to 1Gbps overnight!”

The future’s all to play for

Of the future potential for Assimil8 as a company, Kevin says, “For business analytics we’re really setting ourselves apart. The timing couldn’t be better, given the current level of interest in on-demand intelligence, the need to get the numbers right, and deliver rapid insight to the business. It’s got to a point that we’re selling increasingly to line-of-business managers now, rather than just IT managers. The beauty of what we’re offering via the cloud is that we can get solutions to market very quickly for customers. In contrast to the 3-6 months it might take an IT department, we can have a proof-of-concept up and running within an hour.”

Hosting solutions in the cloud also means they are viable for even the smallest companies. “They appeal to a whole mixture of enterprise, mid-sized and small organisations,” Kevin says. “We recently deployed a five-user Cognos solution, and with SaaS we can go as low as 1-2 users in a shared environment. So, whether a business wants to roll business analytics out to one or a thousand people, it doesn’t really matter.

“Having the IBM SoftLayer brand behind us is very important,” he concludes. “The IT directors we sell to really like this – they view SoftLayer as an enterprise-class platform that’s secure, resilient and always up. Our experiences so far bode very well for the future. Our partnership with IBM SoftLayer has been very fruitful. We’re getting lots of demand, and the sheer scale of the opportunity is very exciting. We have a very good platform to build on, and some great references. Last but not least is IBM’s investment in SoftLayer, this is very visible, and gives our clients ongoing reassurance that they’ve made the right choice.”

For more information

To learn more about IBM Cloud computing solutions, please contact your IBM marketing representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following website: ibm.com/cloud-computing

For more information about Assimil8 and its offerings, please visit the following website: www.assimil8.com



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IBM United Kingdom Limited
PO Box 41, North Harbour
Portsmouth
Hampshire, PO6 3AU

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