

Jackson-Scott Associates

IT management problems consigned to the past, as Jackson-Scott Associates moves to a hosted solution

Over the past fifteen years, Jackson-Scott Associates has built a thriving client base ranging from individuals needing help with tax returns to medium-sized enterprises needing accountancy, taxation and payroll services

From the company's offices in Chessington, Surrey, an eight-strong team works with clients mainly in the south east and the Home Counties, but also further afield. Jackson-Scott began using IRIS Accountancy Suite within a couple of years of formation and the software has provided a solid platform for practice growth. Over time, Jackson-Scott has extended its use so that virtually all the available modules in the suite are now in place.

Jackson-Scott began to experience major problems with its ageing server, so much so that as Director Angela Eden puts it, "It fell over one day and couldn't get up again." She goes on to explain, "We genuinely thought we'd covered all the bases and it was one chance in a hundred thousand that the particular problem would occur, but it did and we must have spent over 35 working hours liaising with our external IT support provider to try to resolve it."

"The perfect solution"

Angela and a colleague had seen a presentation on IRIS OpenHosting at the 2011 IRIS World, the annual event for IRIS Accountancy Solutions customers: "It definitely caught our interest. We could see its potential for our practice and had already started discussing going the hosted route at some stage.

The deteriorating performance of our server meant that we brought the decision forward. It was the perfect solution to all the problems that can arise when your IT infrastructure sits in the office."

Angela confirms that moving the IRIS Accountancy Suite, IRIS PAYE Master and TASBooks software, as well as practice data, to a hosted solution was painless: "Although it could have seemed like a leap in the dark to transfer to a hosted solution, we've had such great service from IRIS over many years that we had every confidence it would

go well. In fact, it went even more smoothly than we expected and the minor niggles that are inevitable in a transition of this nature were swiftly resolved."

Increased practice efficiency

The features that first captured Angela's attention at IRIS World quickly proved to have measurable business value: "Even when everything was running smoothly with the old set-up, we used to spend a lot of man-hours on procedures such as back-ups and changing tapes. Now, we're free of those responsibilities and off-site backups safeguard the integrity of our data."

Quantifying the time-savings, Angela says, "I reckon that our new IRIS OpenHosting solution saves us a good couple of hours every week on routine IT management alone. What's more, in future all software updates will be all carried out automatically behind the scenes, so that will be another time-saver for us."

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The flexibility of anywhere /any time access

There's another important benefit: all the Jackson-Scott team can access the solution remotely. Angela says this makes it easier to catch up with work and keep on top of things out of hours. Her fellow director Sue Towner works mainly from home and has the same access to client and business data as if she were office-based.

Furthermore, as Angela adds, "We make home visits to our elderly clients to discuss their tax returns. Next time around, we will be able to take our laptops along, and log on and do the work there and then. This will save a great deal of time and mean that any queries can be resolved on the spot."

Peace of mind

Increased business resilience is another big plus: "Providing continuity of service to our valued clients is a huge thing for us. The problems with our previous server made us realise that, as accountancy practices become more and more dependent on IT, their vulnerability in this area also increases. Now, through IRIS OpenHosting, the systems and data on which our business relies are safely located in a secure datacentre. This has brought us great peace of mind."

In addition, being able to log on remotely means that should staff ever be prevented from reaching the office, for example during adverse weather conditions, Jackson-Scott will, in effect, remain 'open for business as usual'.

Jackson-Scott is clearly delighted that the nightmare of constant server problems has been replaced by a cost-effective solution that improves efficiency and data security. "It's all trucking away nicely behind the scenes and we're free to focus on caring for our clients and developing our business," concludes Angela.

Solution summary

- *Increased productivity, as time previously spent on routine maintenance is released*
- *Software updates performed automatically, saving further time*
- *Peace of mind from having data hosted off-site in a secure location*
- *Improved flexibility by being able to access the solution remotely, including during client visits*
- *Business can continue as normal even if staff are prevented from reaching the office*

