



The client

Apollo Gardening is a provider of landscaping and gardening products, from weed control solutions to fencing and screening equipment. Based in Sheffield, the company is proud to serve myriad customers across the gardening and DIY sector.

The background

APH had a longstanding relationship with Apollo Gardening, and we knew its site very well. Its server was over seven years old and had had reached capacity, running out of space at least once a week. A new solution was clearly needed.

However, the situation was exacerbated due to the Covid-19 lockdown. First, Apollo Gardening had to rapidly transition to far more remote working than its original IT infrastructure was designed for.

Its firewall was not set up for enough VPN connections, its RDS server did not have enough licenses and its internet connection was quite unreliable. More flexibility and agility was urgently required.

Secondly, although APH already knew the site very well, further site surveys, and the deployment of a new solution, would need to account for remote working and social distancing throughout the lockdown.

Ultimately, Apollo Gardening was looking for a solution that could facilitate additional remote working immediately, as well as business growth over the medium to long-term. The business also wanted to increase security and reliability. Although a hosted option was discussed, Apollo Gardening was keener on the idea of not having a server to manage onsite.

The solution

Following in-depth discussion of Apollo Gardening's current situation, wants and needs, we suggested that a cloud solution would offer both greater flexibility for remote working and better security for the business on an ongoing basis. We put together a proposal and quotation, and this was signed off following a demo and internal meetings.

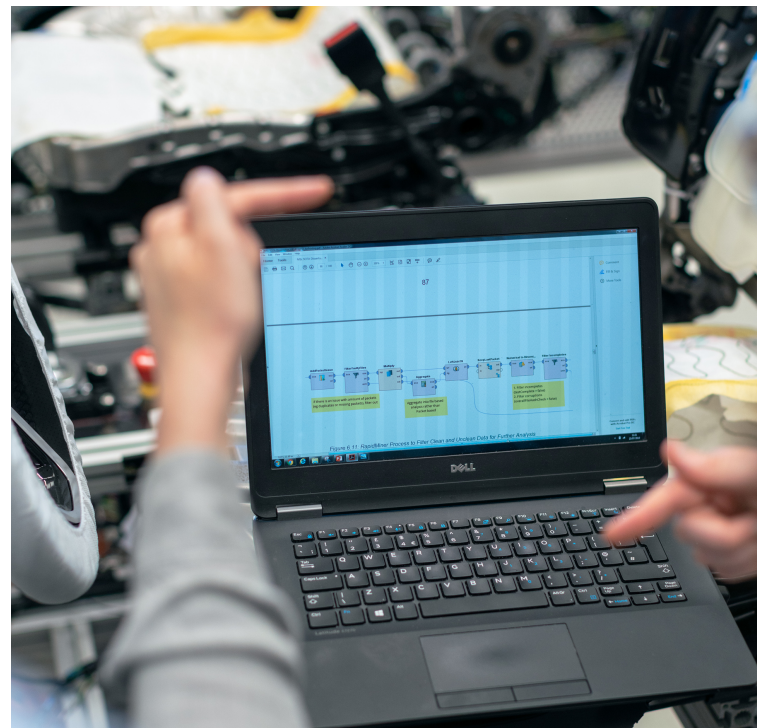
Although APH's engineers were very familiar with the site, a more thorough remote survey was carried out once it had been handed over to the engineer responsible for the project. We then continued with the build of the solution on a temporary host in our own datacentre while we awaited delivery for the new dedicated host for Apollo. During this time, Apollo was able to test the system and verify that all was working as expected.

The solution comprises a fully hosted desktop solution, with all data and application processing carried out in a remote desktop environment hosted in APH's datacentre facility. We also implemented a new reliable leased line, and moved Apollo from our traditional IT support offering to our new inclusive managed service including, antivirus (AV), email and web security.

Once final go-live dates had been agreed, our engineers went to site to ensure all users could log on to the system, were happy with the change in process of logging onto the system and that everything was working as expected.

The solution was then moved to its dedicated host in the datacentre, final copies of data were carried out and a cutover was carried out including Apollo Gardening's global ERP system.

On the go-live day, APH's engineers remained onsite to ensure that everyone had logged on and was using the system without issue. All workstations were removed from the old local domain and the old equipment decommissioned.



The results

Apollo Gardening's IT infrastructure is now fully hosted by APH, with an inclusive managed service looking after all aspects of network security, email and more. Apollo Gardening's system is proactively monitored 24x7x365, so that any issues can be identified and resolved promptly. Remote working can be facilitated seamlessly, and the businesses has a far more reliable and scalable solution in place which will enable its continued growth. With no server onsite to manage or look after, Apollo Gardening can focus on its core business.

Seb Elliot, Marketing and Design Manager at Apollo Gardening said: *"Like so many businesses, we had to rapidly adjust to remote working during the pandemic, and try to keep normal operations running as smoothly as possible. APH's solution has not only ensured that we can keep the same great service going wherever our staff are based; it has also ensured we are positioned strategically for the future. The new system will support our growth, and free up our time to focus on business strategy."*

Andrew Goodwin at APH said: *"We are thrilled to have delivered such tangible benefits for this great business. Some benefits were immediate; Apollo has gone from running out of server space on a regular basis and struggling to facilitate remote working to having all the space it requires and being able to on and off-board remote workers seamlessly. Other benefits will be longer-term, like the flexibility to grow and the freeing up on management time previously spent looking after an onsite solution."*

