



## ABT Online gives clients powerful ERP platforms in the cloud



ABT Online, based in Sydney, is a customized private cloud provider and Australia's leading distributor of Pronto Xi ERP software. The company offers fully managed hosting services and ERP software-as-a-service solutions to businesses from a wide range of industries.

To maintain the highest standards of service for clients, ABT Online knew that it needed to upgrade its diverse, aging hosting infrastructure. Frank O'Donoghue, Senior Consultant at ABT Online, explains: "Our data center architecture was a mixture of hardware, including Compaq, Dell, HP and IBM products. It was such a varied assortment of platforms that we referred to it as a fruit salad!"

Not only did the ABT Online IT team find it increasingly difficult and time-consuming to manage so many diverse environments and work with so many different vendors at once, but it soon became clear that this set-up was a potential future risk.

"Not having a centralized solution meant we had no single back-up solution – potentially a commercial risk. What's more, different pieces of hardware were reaching end-of-life at different times, leaving disparate systems out of warranty and reducing operational efficiency," says O'Donoghue.

### Overview

Fully managed cloud services provider ABT Online was hosting client environments on a truly diverse mix of IT hardware. Having grown its infrastructure over the years, ABT Online was running server, storage and network hardware from a range of vendors – making system management increasingly difficult as components reached end-of-life at different times. To radically simplify its infrastructure, and continue providing high-performance services, ABT Online decided to replace its entire infrastructure with a single Flex System solution.

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—Tristan Pascoe,  
General Manager of Professional Services,  
ABT Online



He continues: “To be clear, there were no problems in terms of the service levels we were offering clients, but we could see that the current arrangements would not be sustainable as the business continued to grow. We wanted a single platform with a single warranty from a single vendor. To reduce risk, boost efficiency and make our own lives easier, we decided on an enterprise-wide infrastructure refresh.”

### Complete consolidation

After reviewing offerings from multiple vendors – and even briefly considering outsourcing its hosting infrastructure entirely – ABT Online decided to replace all of its existing hardware with Flex System™ technology. Says O’Donoghue, “ABT Online offers fully customizable services, unique to each client. It is therefore critical that we are able to expand capacity both horizontally and vertically and ensure consistently high performance levels. Flex System gives us these capabilities.”

Tristan Pascoe, General Manager of Professional Services at ABT Online, states: “Flex System had all the technical capabilities we needed at a great price. Other products simply did not stack up – while many offered similar features, they were significantly more expensive. In that regard, it was a no-brainer.”

ABT Online’s evolving business model meant the company wanted to invest in additional capacity within the Flex System solution in anticipation of future growth. Currently housing its dedicated hosting infrastructure – including all client environments and its own production data – in a Tier 3 data center in Sydney, as well as running its own on-site data center for its internal infrastructure, ABT Online deployed three Flex System x240 nodes, two IBM® Storwize® V7000 Storage nodes and two IBM Storwize V3700 storage systems at both sites. Equipped with Intel® Xeon® processors, the Flex System x240 compute nodes offer excellent performance – ideal for handling clients’ diverse workloads. A total of six Flex System Fabric EN4093R 10GB Scalable Switches handle all network traffic across both of ABT Online’s data centers, and two System x3650 M4 servers at each site handle backups.

### Fast, flexible, future-proof

Tristan Pascoe continues: “The Flex System solution has all the features we need as a SaaS provider – high availability, high performance and easy scalability. Implementing Flex System has improved our service offering as it really lends itself to multi-tenanting – keeping client environments completely secure and separate. We are able to scale very quickly, both horizontally and vertically, enabling us to offer our clients highly flexible services. Flex System was a big step up from our previous technology – end-users noticed a boost in performance and responded extremely positively.”

#### Solution components

##### Hardware

- Flex System™ Enterprise Chassis
- Flex System x240 compute nodes with Intel® Xeon® processors
- Flex System Fabric EN4093R 10Gb Scalable Switches
- Flex System with IBM® Storwize® V7000 Storage node
- IBM Storwize V3700
- System x3650 M4 with Intel Xeon processors

##### Software

- IBM Cognos® 10
- Pronto Xi
- Red Hat Enterprise Linux

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“The new Flex System hardware has much lower power consumption than our old infrastructure, meaning we get more compute power for the same expenditure,” adds Frank O’Donoghue.

ABT Online is currently in the process of migrating all of its client environments to the new Flex System solution and retiring older platforms. This process is around 40 percent complete; new users are automatically hosted on Flex System infrastructure, while migrations of existing client environments are timed to coincide with application or software upgrades, to minimize disruption.

Planning to add around 150 percent more compute nodes, ABT Online is keen to leverage its Flex System investment, expanding its infrastructure as client demand necessitates. Frank O’Donoghue concludes: “We are looking forward to developing our relationship with Lenovo.”

### For more information

To learn more about Flex System, contact your Business Partner or visit:

[lenovo.com/systems](http://lenovo.com/systems)

For more information about ABT Online visit: [abtonline.com.au](http://abtonline.com.au)

To share and connect:



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