

DAISY REINVENTS THE SPEED AND ECONOMICS OF BUSINESS CONTINUITY

The UK's leading BC provider uses agile Zadara storage to deliver cutting-edge performance with cloud-like agility

Daisy is the UK's largest provider of business continuity (BC) expertise, with a 30-year heritage and holistic solutions that span disaster recovery as well as data availability, recovery, and resilience. Daisy serves mid-market and enterprise customers in highly regulated spaces, such as financial services and manufacturing, and a broad range of other sectors. When these businesses find their existing data protection technologies are lacking, either because they have suffered a data breach or need to modernize to meet new business needs, Daisy provides solutions that help them become more agile and competitive.

"We help companies to stay up and running after a data disaster or security incident," explains Les Price, Head of Availability Services. "Since remote working opened up the network, creating more risks to data, BC and cybersecurity have started to converge. Security was once the elephant in the boardroom, but it's now top of the agenda."

"The most refreshing thing has been the agility. Zadara takes away technology blockers, so we can deliver for customers straight away."

George Wignall
Product Manager,
Daisy

New BC and security needs call for modern solutions and underlying technologies, which Daisy's customers cannot efficiently run themselves.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Costs aligned to business outcomes** with 100%-OpEx model and flexible scaling up and down
- **High-performance flash** available across 100% of the platform
- **Simplified management** with an all-in-one platform for block, file, and object storage
- **Faster customer onboarding and scaling** with an on-site buffer that reduces lead times from weeks to seconds
- **Flexibility to adopt upgrade technology** with no long-term commitment to one platform

"With the growth of public cloud, more companies are open to partnering with trusted specialists to fill gaps in their IT," says George Wignall, Product Manager at Daisy. "It's more cost-effective to partner with us than to set up all the extra people and infrastructure to do it in-house. And businesses are becoming more aware of the need for business continuity, especially for data in public cloud where data protection is often not as strong as they originally expected."

To protect its customers in the face of these new challenges, Daisy needed a storage infrastructure that could quickly and flexibly meet new needs – such as virtual desktops for newly-remote workforces, or unanticipated data growth. Daisy implemented a Zadara storage solution that combined enterprise on-premises hardware with cloud-like economics and flexibility, to solve a wide range of business, technical, and customer challenges.

FAST-EVOLVING CHALLENGES

A key problem for Daisy was that it had ageing infrastructure that needed to be refreshed to meet bigger performance and capacity needs, and to power new services. However, the company was reluctant to invest up-front in another traditional system, and enter a new five-year budget cycle, because of the limitations of traditional IT.

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George Wignall

"We wanted to make a significant investment in infrastructure, to help us continue to deliver more and better services," recalls George. "But if we buy traditional storage equipment, we're tied to the platform for five years. The rate of technology change today is huge. We need to keep up with IT and customer requirements, but you can't take advantage of the latest flash technologies in a five-year-old system."

REMOVING MANAGEMENT BURDEN

The limitations of its existing infrastructure were impacting Daisy and its customers in several ways. One was the complexity of managing a platform that handled each of Daisy's three storage tiers in a different way.

"With our old solution, we had to invest in three different platforms: Tier 1 for performance, one for backup, and an object store," says George. "Because of their different heritages, we had to learn the different idiosyncrasies of each. So, we had three times the management burden, even though everything came from one manufacturer."

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George Wignall

EASIER CUSTOMER ONBOARDING

Before you can even think about onboarding customers you need to ensure that you have enough storage resources to meet new and existing customer needs. This requires constant, careful planning to ensure enough of the right capacity storage is available, while being financially cost effective.

STANDING UP NEW SERVICES SOONER

When a business approaches Daisy about a BC solution, it is often in reaction to a cyber-attack or event it was unprepared for. To help the customer recover and protect itself as quickly as possible, Daisy needed the ability to stand up new services at speed.

"When a customer has suffered a cyber-attack and wants our cloud services, or needs more backup capacity to keep its data protected, they need those services now," explains George. "So, we needed to be able to deploy DR and capacity upgrades much faster than our previous storage allowed."

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ONE SOLUTION FOR ALL STORAGE TIERS

The Zadara solution was a fully-managed, enterprise-grade storage platform, installed at Daisy's locations and financed on a 100%-OpEx basis. One Zadara infrastructure provides all the storage services Daisy needs:

- **a high-performance flash tier** for virtual desktop infrastructure, data replication, and disaster recovery
- **an object store** for backup, archive, Veeam immutable storage, and general Tier 2 storage
- **traditional SASⁱ storage** for backup

ⁱSAS: Serial Attached SCSI, a storage protocol that moves data to and devices such as HDDs and tape drives

All services are provisioned and managed in one console, providing single-pane-of-glass control. Daisy can scale capacity up or down instantly, with an on-site hardware buffer that can be switched on or off as service demand changes. And Zadara's 100%-OpEx model allows Daisy to avoid large capex payments, or being locked into a long-term commitment.

The Zadara hardware is located at the company's three data centers in London, Birmingham, and Farnborough in the UK. Zadara provides pro-active management and maintenance of the infrastructure, regular technology upgrades, and 24/7/365 support.

THE BENEFITS

INCREASED AGILITY

Where the company's previous solution tied it to one inflexible infrastructure for several years, the Zadara solution has enabled Daisy to onboard customers and scale their services at speed.

"Agility is the key story with Zadara," explains George. "It cuts down our time to deliver for customers who need to improve BC straight away. And we have a flexible buffer to help us maintain services for customers whose needs have grown unexpectedly."

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ALL-IN-ONE MANAGEMENT

By providing one platform for block, file, and object storage, the Zadara solution simplifies management and reduces the storage hardware footprint at Daisy's data centers.

"With Zadara it's a single pane of glass, it all works in exactly the same way, and it's easy to use and learn," explains George. "I can provision it how I want to, which is good for our recovery platforms and replication services."

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ALWAYS AT THE CUTTING EDGE

Moving to Zadara has enabled Daisy to use high-performance flash across 100% of its platform, compared to only 20% with the company's previous infrastructure. The company can replace or add hardware flexibly, without having to make a large up-front payment.

"We're now able to take advantage of today's faster technologies, because we aren't tied to one platform for five years," says George. "When a useful new technology comes along, we can take advantage of it straight away. When a technology is no longer suitable, we can phase it out. There's an immediate indirect benefit to customers in that we can do more with fewer resources and pass those savings on. We're always giving them a cutting-edge service, rather than upgrading once every few years."

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COSTS ALIGNED TO CONTRACTS

Zadara's 100%-OpEx finance model, flexible scaling, and on-site capacity buffer have enabled Daisy to closely align costs to the value storage delivers.

"If we get a contract for 100 TB of storage I can provision it today, and when it grows to 110 TB I can just pay a little bit more for the extra capacity," says George. "Likewise, if I retire a service, or I no longer need specific features, I can turn it off and I'm not paying for it anymore. That flexibility of being able to scale up and down is really key for us."

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THE FUTURE

As business continuity priorities evolve rapidly, Daisy has the agile infrastructure it needs to develop new services to meet its customers' new needs.

"The pandemic has changed the direction of IT" explains Les, "We're pivoting towards unified solutions that support office working, home workers, greater use of public cloud, and managing the security risks these new ways of using technology bring. We're developing flexible services that fit the way work is changing."

Zadara has helped to enable that flexibility, says Les. "We've been able to completely reshape how we provide our services. And the most refreshing thing has been the agility. Zadara takes away technology blockers, so we can deliver for customers straight away."

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