

Digital Printing Software

TimeHarvest is a specialist software developer focusing on the professional digital printing industry. Founded in 2003, the company employs six staff developing and delivering a suite of quotation and production management software, including DigiQuote, JobControl, FileFix and PrintCALC.

Much of the design and printing industry is Apple Mac-based, so when designing and building their products TimeHarvest had no hesitation in choosing Apple's FileMaker database environment.

"Using FileMaker as our development environment was a no-brainer," said Geoff Stephens, Director, TimeHarvest. "It was ideal for our needs in terms of functionality, usability, reliability and performance - and still is. FileMaker's cross-platform capability means that there are no barriers between PC-based front offices and Mac-based production, enabling everyone to work as one team."

Things have gone well for the company and it's products have sold strongly. But, even with a customer list that reads like a Who's Who of professional digital printers, the company is still looking for ways to improve their market leadership position.

Hosted Rental Alternative

"We had been selling our software products in the traditional way since the very first release," continued Geoff. "But we felt that we could offer our customers a great alternative if we had a 'hosted rental' approach as well."

Through the company's active membership of the UK's FileMaker Business Alliance they had met with RapidHost and formed a positive impression.

"We knew that RapidHost were experts in hosting FileMaker systems so we gave them a call," added Geoff. "It didn't take us very long to decide that working with RapidHost would allow us to bring a managed service offer to market quickly, safely and profitably. So we went for it."

TimeHarvest believed that there would be a number of clear benefit areas for their customers who adopted the managed service deployment instead of buying the software in the normal way. These include a significantly reduced impact on cash flow, greater system security and integrity, improved central support and maintenance, and the ability for customer-facing staff to 'roam' whilst still having full system access.

"Giving our customer the ability to roam is really important," said Geoff. "With the traditional office-based server approach the customer would need to work from their office or install and manage a Virtual Private Network. But with the managed service approach customers can access their systems from anywhere that's got an internet connection. It is still very secure but with no fuss."

Face Creative Services

Face Creative Services is TimeHarvest's largest customer and has for some time used the software on a server in their own offices. When the managed service option was made available they decided to change over and have now gone live on a Virtual Private Server hosted by RapidHost.

"We needed to improve that way that we protected our data for our ISO9000 accreditation," said Bill Harding, Director, Face Creative Services. "The managed service option from TimeHarvest fitted the bill exactly. It meant that RapidHost would deliver a professional data management regime without us needing to do anything at all. That means one less thing for us to be concerned with - enabling us to concentrate on customer service!"

The system is live as a managed service and is working well.

"We are very pleased with the level of performance and reliability that RapidHost have delivered," added Bill. "And we've got an additional benefit that we hadn't previously thought about. We can now work with the system wherever we are as long as there is an internet connection. I could even do my job from 'down the pub' ... if only!"



Managed Services Are The Way Forward

Face Creative Services aren't the only TimeHarvest customers interested in the managed service offer. In fact the company is delighted with the level of positive interest that it is receiving.

"We are confident that next year we'll sell as many managed service configurations as we do traditionally purchased software licences," said Geoff. "And the year after I wouldn't be surprised if the clear majority of sales are delivered on a rental basis. This is good for us and our customers, and it's down to the confidence that we have in RapidHost and their hosted FileMaker expertise. Between us, FileMaker and RapidHost, we make a very good team indeed."