

Online Advertising Network

Utarget was established in 2000 as a specialist online advertising network focused on high impact full screen advertising products for the UK and European internet markets. The company was acquired by .Fox Networks in March 2008 and changed its name to Utarget.Fox.

The acquisition has allowed the company to incorporate the experience of the Fox International Channels TV departments and to expand much faster internationally, now offering its services in 33 global territories outside of the US.

The core capability of the company that has led it to become the market leader in the UK and Europe is founded on the software that they've developed to manage the on-demand distribution of video advertising to subscribing internet websites.

"We've supply video advertising in real-time to more than 1,000 websites across all 24 hours of the day," said Ben Harraway, Chief Technology Officer, Utarget.Fox. "That means that we have to have extremely robust systems in place to keep our service levels where we want them to be."

Specialist Providers

Utarget.Fox decided to split their advert-serving IT infrastructure into two parts and to recruit specialist providers to help them with each. One provider was to develop the real-time video-streaming infrastructure and the other to focus on the database and application management aspects that would ensure that the company could accurately track, and bill, the adverts that had been served.

"We expected the database and application hosting side to grow quite quickly so we were looking for a service provider who could respond to that need," commented Ben. "RapidHost fitted the bill very well. They were working with other clients who needed similarly robust systems and proved their technical skills during the proposal stage."

The system went live in 2002 and more than six years later is still running well.

"The SQL 2005 database just grew and grew," continued Ben. "At one stage it had over 150 million rows and took up 100 Gigabytes of storage. RapidHost just took this in their stride and made sure that the system continued to perform well and was properly backed-up."

3 Million Adverts

The business model of Utarget.Fox means that they only get paid when each of up to 3 million video adverts are correctly served each day.

"In our environment, uptime of the total video-service is absolutely critical," added Ben. "Downtime means upset clients and immediate lost revenue. So highly responsive 24 hour support is an essential, and I'm pleased to say that we get that from RapidHost."

Since the system has been live RapidHost have played a key role in helping Utarget.Fox improve the service speed and reliability.

"RapidHost's technical team have been marvellous," concluded Ben. "They have worked hard to give us new ideas on optimising the infrastructure for performance and making it even more robust. They think beyond the boundaries of our contract and offer well reasoned suggestions for areas that are not their direct responsibility. I like their attitude."