



CASE STUDY

Secure, anytime,
anywhere
application
delivery supports
largest e-Discovery
service in Ireland





ABOUT GRANT THORNTON

Grant Thornton Ireland is part of the Grant Thornton global network of independent assurance, tax, and advisory firms. As a trusted business advisor, Grant Thornton has a strong focus on quality and delivers insights to help organisations navigate today's volatile markets. Grant Thornton Ireland has 53 partners and employs over 1,450 people in 7 offices across Ireland and 56,000 located in over 140 countries around the world.

In recent years, this professional services organisation has evolved its service delivery model in response to changing client needs. To that end, it calls upon more technology and cloud-based services — such as an electronic discovery (eDiscovery) platform — to support its services. As it has increased the number of technology solutions it offers, the firm has become more concerned about security and the clients' online experiences.



BUSINESS CHALLENGE

As the largest and most successful provider of e-Discovery services in Ireland, Grant Thornton helps clients to identify and preserve evidence, collect and process it for review and identify errors and missing material.

Core to providing this service is its 'Relativity' e-Discovery application.

While data security is very much top of mind given the sensitivity of the litigation process, Grant Thornton is always searching for ways to improve user experience.

Its clients demand 'always on', seamless access to its hosted e-Discovery platform, irrespective of their working location.

Previously, virtual private networks or VPNs were the order of the day, but the management overhead associated with controlling this application access method was significant and detracted from Grant Thornton's core service delivery.

It wasn't uncommon for someone on the team to get a support request, late on a Saturday night, simply because a user's IP address had changed.

Finding a solution to reduce dependency on VPNs as an application access method while retaining a high level of security was fundamental to the success of the project.

"We had specific requirements around the type of authentication and the way our clients would want to access the application. The solution needed to support varying sizes of client. And we wanted a solution that was hosted in the Irish jurisdiction so as to address potential concerns around GDPR and the US Cloud Act."

Mike Harris, Partner - Digital Risk, Grant Thornton, Ireland

SOLUTION

Solution Summary

- Network design based on principles of security and flexibility
- Deployment of Akamai's Enterprise Application Access
- Private cloud infrastructure with servers, storage and firewalls in CTI's Irish datacentre
- High-performance, high-speed internet services with private connection to Grant Thornton's offices
- Configuration of a smaller node for offsite backup

The CTI Global professional services team set about understanding the parameters of Grant Thornton's project.

The first step was to design an application delivery ecosystem that would support the principles of security and flexibility, thereby meeting the demands of Grant Thornton's clients.

A private cloud infrastructure with appropriate servers, storage and firewall technology for perimeter security was built in CTI Global's Dublin-based datacentre. This immediately fulfilled a key criterion in keeping the data in the Irish jurisdiction.

Private, high-speed internet connectivity linking the datacentre to Grant Thornton's head office was commissioned together with a smaller node for offsite backup purposes.

The core of the solution lies in Akamai's Enterprise Application Access, a unique cloud architecture that supports multiple authentication methods, while ensuring that only authorised Grant Thornton clients have access to the e-Discovery application.

"We want to protect the data that we're handling on behalf of our clients. Increasingly our clients want to know we're doing it correctly. They want to see that we're using industry leading technologies."

Mike Harris, Partner - Digital Risk, Grant Thornton, Ireland



SOLUTION

Introducing Akamai's Enterprise Application Access (EAA)

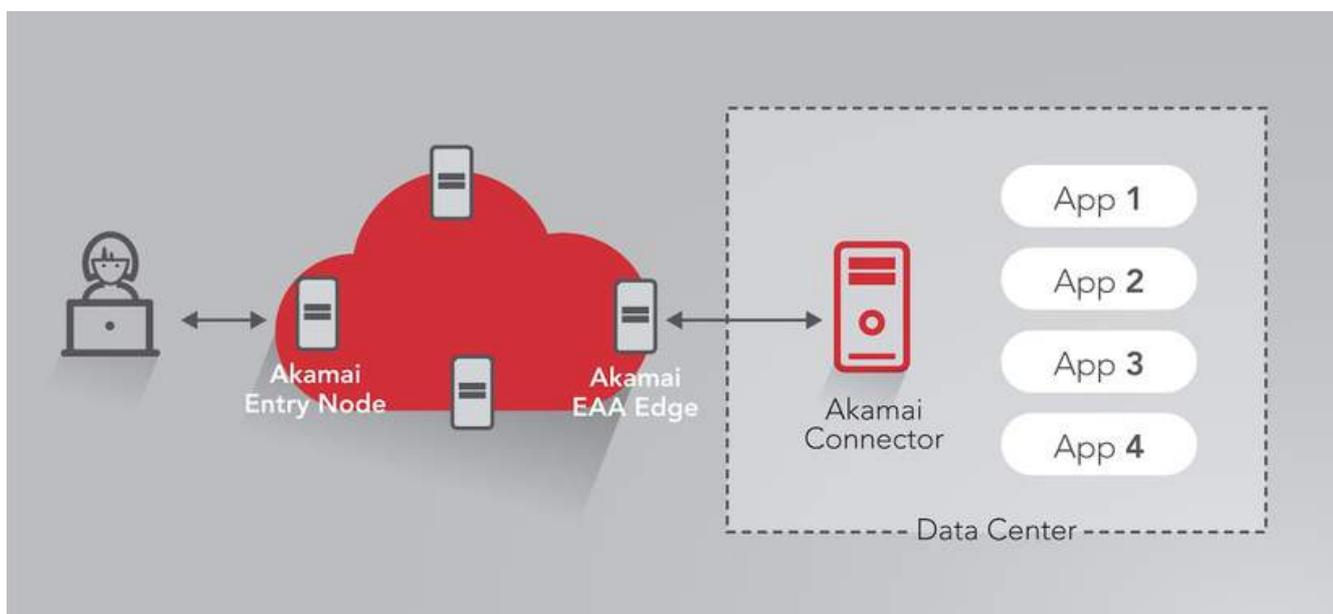
Akamai's Enterprise Application Access is an easy-to-deploy service that delivers secure, high-performance access to applications, bypassing the need for network access while reducing application delivery risk, cost, and complexity. It provides secure identity, single sign-on, multi-factor authentication, and monitoring capabilities for applications across multiple locations.

It's an identity-aware, high-performance service which provides secure application access for users whenever and wherever they need it.

In Grant Thornton's case, solicitors, barristers and other legal staff can access the sensitive information they need to, anytime, anywhere, whether that's from a broadband connection at home or an internet access point in the Law Library.

"A great by-product of this project was VPN replacement. Our architecture immediately removed the IT management overhead while still keeping an eye to security, compliance, governance and privacy issues."

Mark Donnellan, Sales Director, CTI Global



BUSINESS BENEFITS

The most immediate and tangible benefit from the project, was the **reduction in the IT administration overhead** associated with VPN management.

Harris estimates that the Akamai EAA solution has freed up almost 40 hours per week, a welcome development as the staff managing this infrastructure are also involved in client service delivery.

The **user experience has also improved**, as evidenced by the reduction in support calls. Legal professionals and other support staff can securely access the application from any location and are no longer tied to static IP addresses at fixed locations.

The solution is also **future-proofed** in that the infrastructure will easily scale, allowing the addition of customers seamlessly. Adding new users as part of customer onboarding is now "borderline trivial" according to Harris.

In fact, this blueprint for delivery of e-Discovery has already been adopted by other Grant Thornton practises in Europe, driven by similar requirements around data sovereignty and compliance.

Mike and his team were also impressed with the breadth of functionality in Akamai's EAA. It supports **auditing and logging, multiple authentication methods**, and works as a seamless part of Grant Thornton's larger branded solution, which other vendors couldn't accommodate.

"I was impressed by the flexibility and range of authentication offered by Akamai. We felt other proposed solutions were putting constraints on us. Being in a client service business, we like to be able to say yes."

Mike Harris, Partner - Digital Risk, Grant Thornton, Ireland

WHY AKAMAI AND CTI GLOBAL?

Mike and his team evaluated a number of potential technology vendors. However, the Akamai application combined with CTI Global's secure, private cloud infrastructure stood out.

They already recognised Akamai as a world leader in enterprise security and having a single partner to deploy and support the overall solution, in the form of CTI Global, was very attractive.

"We found CTI Global proactive and easy to work with. The team minimised the time from initial conversations to having a detailed design to actual implementation.

That's what we liked, that ability to work quickly because we worked quickly too."

Mike Harris, Partner - Digital Risk, Grant Thornton, Ireland

