

# The bigger picture



## Image Source

Image Source is the world's leading independent producer and brand for creative and commercial royalty free stock photography, supplying images to creative professionals based around the world through [imagesource.com](http://imagesource.com). Users can search through the entire collection online to purchase and download instantly from thousands of individual images or hundreds of themed disc titles. Image Source has an international client base with offices in the UK, Germany and the USA.

## The challenges

Image Source stores over Six Terabytes of data which has to be available 24/7. Clients are members of the public and creative professionals needing rapid search and download facilities from a reliable stock image provider.

Previously, Image Source maintained co-location facilities, running and maintaining their own hardware in a third-party datacentre.

"Our intensive hosting requirements placed a strain on our hardware, which in turn was straining our IT support staff," says Jonathan Biggington, IT Manager at Image Source. "Staff had to run from our office to the datacentre to maintain, reset or replace servers when something went wrong. It was too much of a strain on resources to continue."

Paul Burton, Presales Technical Consultant at Claranet, designed the solution that Image Source adopted and stressed the importance of a Managed Service for smooth-running business.

"Claranet already provided leased line solutions to Image Source, who were familiar with our customer service and happy to hear our proposal for hosting services. Outsourcing to a Managed Services Provider requires minimal participation from them, freeing up support staff and reducing administrative hassle."

## The solution

Claranet worked with Image Source to design and implement an appropriate, scalable and resilient infrastructure. The installation process had to be completed within 20 working days to enable configuration and testing of the server before the site went live on the new system.

"Through the consultation process, Claranet identified the requirements of the new Image Source solution," explains David Mitchell. "Our technical expertise allowed us to select cutting-edge hardware and create a hosting solution that could cope with the demands of Image Source customers."



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## Hosting

"Image Source needed round-the-clock stability and a backup option that could activate instantly in case of emergency or for routine maintenance," says Jonathan Bigginton. "Claranet designed a solution using a primary image server located in one datacentre and a backup image server in a secondary datacentre. If at any point in time the primary site failed then the global server load balancer's employed in the solution would switch all incoming feeds to the secondary datacentre"

The two image servers were only part of the overall solution provided. The rest of the solution included a web server, MS-SQL server and FTP server at each location. By separating these server functions required by Image Source, individual servers could be assigned to tasks and specifically configured for optimum performance.

## Connectivity

The Claranet core network stretches across Europe and provides fast, high-performance connections to the Internet. Multiple data paths allow for very high throughputs, with fibre connectivity in the core network. Claranet also has multiple fibre connections to the London Internet Exchange (LINX), as well as Internet Exchange Points in Paris and Frankfurt.

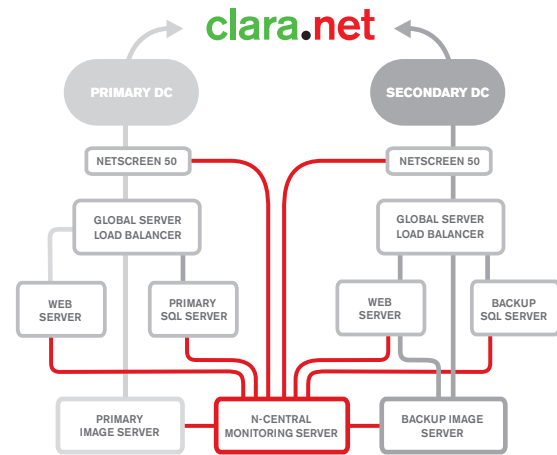
## Security

To improve security for Image Source, Claranet configured the firewalls in to 3 different security zones. The web server sat in its own security zone while the second and third zones were for the SQL and Image servers.

Zone 1 was freely available (with firewall protection) to the Internet allowing Image Source's customers to gain access to their website. Zones 2 and 3 were restricted to Image Source personnel only. The rationale behind this was that the web servers need to accept incoming connections from the Internet and are therefore more likely to be compromised. Connections to the database security zone are only accepted from the web server security zone, which effectively creates a secondary firewall protecting the database server from direct attacks from the Internet.

"Each site is protected by a Netscreen 50 Firewall," says Paul Burton. "Claranet installed these units due to the potentially high volume of traffic that could hit the servers; with a maximum throughput of 170Mbps these firewalls will have no problems handling the demand. Also the high configurability of the device means that access through specific ports can be allowed with minimal overhead on the hardware".

"Image Source and Claranet performed a full penetration test exercise before the site went live, with excellent results," says David Mitchell. "As the package is fully managed, Claranet can provide upgrades, patches and routine maintenance to the security system as necessary, massively reducing Image Source's administrative work load."



## Support

"Support is a vital component of any managed service offering," says Image Source's Jonathan Bigginton.

"Image Source's reputation as the leading supplier of stock photography depends on being constantly available, and having the support systems in place to ensure problems can be resolved as quickly as possible."

Claranet provided three lines of support to Image Source technical staff, all from the same telephone number and all following seamless handover procedures to ensure full awareness from each technical support team.

During office hours, service calls are routed to Corporate Support based in the Claranet head office at Southampton Row. When a call is received, a ticket number is issued and a team member will deal with the case as a priority. Out of hours, telephone calls and ongoing tickets are seamlessly routed to Claranet's main Network Operations Centre (NOC) where experts work around the clock to deal with faults and enquiries. To bolster the effectiveness of support services, a dedicated Image Source Account Manager acts as a point of contact for all technical issues.

## The result

"The switch to Claranet was a long-term investment for Image Source," says Jonathan Bigginton. "It has dramatically reduced the amount of time our IT and support teams spend dealing with server issues."

"Since implementing the system, Claranet has worked closely with Image Source to ensure a smooth transition to their new managed environment" says David Mitchell. "Image Source's customers should find that using the new system is noticeably smoother. From Image Source's point of view, the use and management is far easier." "Image Source's move of our business to Managed Hosting has reduced administration, increased efficiency and improved customer experience." Ed Sexton believes the solution Claranet implemented will prove its resilience in the future.

"Fast-moving, demanding companies like Alstec need to be able to rely on their IT and the company providing it. In partnership, we've created a cutting-edge infrastructure which will support Alstec for many years - saving money, improving connectivity and ensuring security."

**For further information, please visit :**

[www.imagesource.com](http://www.imagesource.com)  
[www.clara.net](http://www.clara.net)