

Contraplay Ltd is a web business which specialises in producing high-quality content for online pay-to-play games.

Based in London, the company's work includes online versions of popular television game shows *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire* and *Deal Or No Deal*, using Flash and PHP platforms to build the games.

As well as the games themselves, Contraplay also provides its customers with payment systems and broadband database systems to administer the content.

As a result, the bandwidth and data storage requirements of Contraplay's business are significant, leading them to seek the help of iomart to host four web servers and two database servers in their state-of-the-art datacentres.

Joe Petroni, Managing Director at Contraplay, says dependable service from iomart was a key factor in the success of the business.



He says: "The end user accesses our games by clicking a link of the website of the television network which produces the show, so it's absolutely critical we can rely on our servers."

"We work on a revenue share system with the networks, whereby we both take a proportion of the revenue generated by the games. Every minute you're down is another minute you're losing revenue, so we need our servers to be very stable."

This profit-sharing arrangement is by far the most rewarding income stream for Contraplay. Without an industry-leading 100% level of network up-time, Contraplay's profitability would be seriously hampered, with the company having to rely on the less-lucrative development side of the business.

"One of our games in France has been played more than 20 million times in the last year," says James. "With so many games going through, even an hour of down time would be pretty terrible for us."

Joe's experience of iomart precedes his time at Contraplay, and was a major part of his decision to use them in his current role. Formerly employed by major television company Celador, Joe had been in contact with iomart for Celador's server hosting requirements and was impressed by the service on offer.

He says: "They knew exactly what we wanted, so when I joined Contraplay I already had the good experience which really made up my mind for me."

Joe wasn't to be disappointed. A major technical problem emerged with one of Contraplay's servers, which was struggling under the strain of the volume of data it was being asked to handle. iomart contacted Dell about ordering a new server to take some of the burden away from the existing hardware, but Contraplay would have had to wait three weeks for delivery.

Joe says: "We needed the new server urgently, so we were really starting to worry. iomart had spare server capacity in one of its datacentres and we arranged to buy that from them."

"If we hadn't been able to do that it would have caused us a lot of problems - we might have had to move one of the games to a different hosting platform, which would have taken more time than we could afford."

With Contraplay's online games proving to be a great success so far, Joe says he expects the company's server requirements to be even greater before long. On the basis of current performance, Joe says he expects any increased requirement to be serviced by iomart.

He says: "The thing that keeps me at iomart more than anything else - and it's a very competitive market - is the quality of the technical team. They are absolutely brilliant and always quick to get to the nub of what we're talking about."

"You'll always get a straight answer, too. With some service providers you find they can try to pull the wool over your eyes, but that's never been the case with iomart."

"Even if it's 3am and I need something urgently they're always happy to help, and never grumpy on the phone!"



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