

Data#3 Customer Story

# International Safety Systems

*International Safety Systems switches to modern, secure Microsoft Azure environment*



Data#3

AIRS VISION  
Centralised Risk Management

# Data#3



## Testimonial

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**You might be tempted to do it yourself, but you will end up saving money and getting a better result with the right partner. When I filled out the customer satisfaction survey, I gave it a 10 out of 10. One hundred percent.”**

**David Rickward, Commercial Director,  
International Safety Systems.**

## Objective

International Safety Systems wanted to modernise their IT infrastructure and migrate to the cloud.

## Approach

As International Safety Systems infrastructure neared end of life, the business sought recommendations from a trusted consultant, and determined that a shift to Microsoft Azure was the right path forward. That advisor joined Data#3 and they recognised that the expertise and culture of their partnership would make a good match.

## Project Highlight

**“The most outstanding part of the project is the improved reliability. We have had no unscheduled downtime thanks to the way our Data#3 consultant designed the platform.”**

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## Benefits

- Scalable environment
- Exceptional availability
- Built-in backup and disaster recovery functionality
- Improved security
- Fast and cost-effective, making it easier to innovate
- Customer’s data is cloud-hosted, residing in their chosen location
- Streamlined onboarding process
- Access to additional expertise
- Avoidance of capital expenditure (CapEx)

## Solutions & Services

- ✓ Microsoft Azure Installation

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## The Background

International Safety Systems (ISS) provides customised safety, quality and risk management solutions to customers around the world, helping them to meet compliance requirements while improving their business resilience.

ISS had been hosting its specialised apps in-house, using a thin client approach to distribute software. As available cloud options matured, ISS recognised the potential to work more efficiently and offer an enhanced service to customers.

## The Challenge

The AIRS app from ISS is used to capture and manage safety and quality data for customers in stringently controlled industries, such as defence and aerospace. The small, very busy ISS team helps its customers meet all compliance obligations, reducing risk and operating more safely. Until recently, Commercial Director David Rickward said that managing infrastructure was a way of life.

*“We had a traditional model, before Software as a Service was widely available. We hosted our software on our own hardware in a Sydney data centre. In addition to the hosting cost we had all the associated maintenance costs and then every five years, we would have to throw it away and start again, which meant incurring substantial capital costs and add-on services. Whilst it allowed us to distribute AIRS online it was a costly and labour-intensive model.”*

That service model required effort from customers, and the cost was amplified by the need for extremely high availability to meet the service levels required by clients.

*“We had backup redundancy and disaster recovery servers running. Overall, we were happy with the uptime – however, there were occasional unscheduled outages which required on-premises support, adding more cost,” explained Rickward.*

As the time for renewal approached, with cloud options now offering greater maturity, ISS sought advice from a trusted cloud specialist, who learned about the ISS business model and made initial suggestions.

*“He was experienced with Microsoft Azure. After we started discussions with him, he moved to Data#3. He provided a lot of really good ideas around platform design to make our operations more efficient. We had been working with him for several years and we wanted to continue that relationship.”*



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## IT Outcome

After careful evaluation, ISS followed Data#3's recommendation for a Microsoft Azure environment, first instating one instance of the ISS software, then provisioning more until the solution hosted all customers. Microsoft Azure backup and DR, as well as several Microsoft Azure security and management features were put to work to help the ISS team work efficiently.

*“It was a reasonably quick transition by technology standards, taking six months from our first proof of concept discussions, through commitment and implementation. We canvassed our biggest clients to see if there were any issues for them to move to the new environment, especially in terms of security. Their primary concern was where their data would reside.”*

*“We sandbox tested with a couple of our biggest clients, migrated some smaller clients, then lastly the bigger organisations over a period of eight months.”*

The solution included expertise from a Data#3 cloud specialist, so that ISS would always be positioned to work proactively and able to get the most from the Microsoft Azure platform, while managing costs effectively.

*“We're leveraging our Data#3 cloud specialist as our platform manager. We monitor the day-to-day ourselves, and he does general housekeeping a couple of times a month to ensure updates are installed. He also talks us through new security features we might be interested in. This input is invaluable to us – we're a small company and can handle tasks ourselves but can't do everything in-house. This arrangement gives us access to the wider resources of Data#3 when we need it.”*

Rickward has stated that the flexibility of the Microsoft Azure platform has already impressed ISS clients, given the speed and cost-effectiveness of rolling out the custom app that the company is known for. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

*“One client in the aviation industry initially wanted to run the app in-house. They went to their IT department, who quoted six figures for the new servers, and managing and monitoring those assets. We can spin up a dedicated host for them and provide continuous access to data. It was one fifth of the cost that their internal IT would have needed.”*

*“They would have had to go through getting budget approval, which would have taken 12 months, but being a pay-as-you-go model, it was signed off within a week.”*

Microsoft invests around \$1 billion (USD) each year on Microsoft Azure security, with developers designing solutions for the modern threat landscape where organisations face an increasingly sophisticated barrage of attacks. Rickward said that this timely boost to security is “absolutely a plus”, with the shift to the secure online platform reducing risk for ISS and its clients.

*“It is a valuable part of the solution without a shadow of a doubt. Before, every thin client had its own port, so there were multiple ports facing the world. By changing, customers now have web access through a firewall, with only one single point of entry. When you look at it from a security risk point of view, it is considerably better than before, and our customers stay safer.”*

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## Business Outcome

The transition for customers went smoothly, causing no disruption and earning praise for the improved ISS offering after the shift to Microsoft Azure.

*“Their lives got easier without having to run the thin client. The cutover was seamless, and the users had their familiar app, they weren’t seeing any difference except that they just had to use a hyperlink instead of clicking an icon on their desktop.”*

As a technology business itself, ISS places considerable importance on finding solutions that keep its lead position in its competitive market.

*“We can stay at the forefront of technology, always using the latest and greatest, as opposed to buying hardware that becomes obsolete in a month, which then becomes a patch job. Moving to the Microsoft Azure platform means we can stay at the front of the curve, in turn giving our customers the best outcomes,”* described Rickward.

This progress is aided by sharing knowledge, with the Data#3 Azure expert helping the small ISS team to gain confidence in the new platform. Rickward is happy that the business has benefitted from someone with enormous depth of Azure experience.

*“He has done quite a bit of work with our internal team on things like day-to-day monitoring and firewalls. He’s helped our team to completely understand what to look for, and how to achieve compliance.”*

*“It has been a game-changer for us, and we look at it as a partnership arrangement. Given what the Data#3 Azure expert has delivered us, it is a lot more capability than we would otherwise have, and we’ve gained a lot more capability in-house with him there.”*

That capability extends to helping ISS respond to requests for tenders. Rickward said that the ability to access expertise helps to show prospective corporate and government clients that ISS has the capability needed when providing such a critical service.

*“The advantage of dealing with a technology company like Data#3 is that if we don’t have specific expertise in-house, we know we have it through them. When we’re bidding on some contracts, it gives us more credibility to have that support, especially in the government space. We do a lot of work for government and from a security point of view, if we’re working with an organisation that is already approved, it makes for a more seamless transition, and we don’t have to delay delivery getting approvals.”*

For customers, the Microsoft Azure platform raises the bar for custom solutions. ISS can now offer shared platforms, where customers’ individual environments are logically separated, and where customers prefer, dedicated platforms can be quickly provided. The ability to store data in their own or an approved jurisdiction has proven to be essential.

*“Microsoft Azure provides more flexibility, allowing us to do more for our clients with specific requirements. For example, for legal or regulatory reasons, clients may need to ensure their data is stored in a particular jurisdiction. With Microsoft Azure we know we can provide that assurance and have them covered.”*

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## Conclusion

Although Rickward said that any major change in delivery method had the “potential to be traumatic”, he was clear that with the right team in place, it didn’t have to be.

*“My advice is simple: find someone who totally understands what you do. Data#3 was very good in terms of what we were trying to achieve and that understanding meant we were able to map it out together – it was truly a collaborative experience. In terms of understanding the platform and how to manage disaster recovery, that was important.”*

*“The transition itself should be made straightforward – taking the environment off the existing platform and moving it into the cloud. However, there are so many tricks to managing Microsoft Azure well with the right security around it, it’s essential to engage with an experienced consulting firm.”*

*“You might be tempted to do it yourself, but you will end up saving money and getting a better result with the right partner. When I filled out the customer satisfaction survey, I gave it a 10 out of 10. One hundred percent!”*

Ultimately, the solution was measured by ISS against the benefits and service levels they were able to provide to their valued customers around the world. The switch to the Microsoft Azure platform has been deemed a success.

*“The most outstanding part of the project is the improved reliability; we have had no unscheduled downtime because of the way the platform is set up. When we did have minor issues, we were able to failover to backup systems without service interruption. The service delivery has been outstanding,”* concluded Rickward.



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## **International Safety Systems**

## **Data#3 and Microsoft**

Since 1994, Data#3 has combined forces with Microsoft to help our customers adapt and grow. Today, we are Microsoft's largest Australian business partner with the highest level of competency across the Microsoft ecosystem. Our hundreds of accredited consultants are ready to help our customers deliver the digital future; from enhancing productivity and collaboration with Microsoft 365 and the latest Surface devices, to transforming business processes with Dynamics 365, to ensuring our customers get the most value from Azure cloud. Our scale and expertise enable our unparalleled support to customers selecting, deploying, managing and securing Microsoft applications, products and devices.

**Data#3**

 **Microsoft**