



# Virgin Media

» UK's leading entertainment and communications company accelerates time to market, shrinks release cycles, with BMC BladeLogic

## BEFORE

- » Slow lead time for launching new / adapted services
- » Time required to deploy each configuration item for a Web service: 30 minutes
- » Time required for web based application server build: 90 minutes
- » Manual, error- prone application release management process
- » Uncertain service quality
- » Lack of service and server compliance

## AFTER

- » Faster release cycles and accelerated time-to-market for services
- » Time required to deploy each configuration item for a Web service: six minutes
- » Time required for web based application server build: three minutes
- » Fast, automated application release management process
- » Enhanced, reliable service quality
- » Configuration compliance of the server environment



## GEOGRAPHY

United Kingdom

## INDUSTRY

Telecommunications

## SOLUTIONS

BMC BladeLogic Operations Manager

BMC BladeLogic Applications

Release Manager

Like any organization in the current financial downturn, Virgin Media needs to bring its data center management costs under control and still meet the reliability and time-to-market requirements of the business. The UK's leading entertainment and communications company believes it may have found the best answer for achieving these conflicting demands. A BMC BladeLogic IT service automation solution is helping Virgin Media eliminate manual error-prone application updates, and enhance configuration and change control. By automating the packaging and code promotion processes to rollout application releases and updates from development to production environments, the firm is accelerating time to market, shrinking release cycles, and improving application quality.

Almost 10 million customers have chosen Virgin Media, making it the UK's leading entertainment and communications company. Thanks to Virgin Media, customers can — for the first time — get everything they need from one company: a "quadplay" of digital TV, broadband, phone, and mobile. The outcome is that Virgin Media is the most popular residential broadband provider in the UK, the UK's largest mobile virtual network operator, and the second-largest home phone and pay TV provider.

## VIRGIN MEDIA ACHIEVES FASTER TIME TO MARKET

BMC BladeLogic Application Release Manager is helping Virgin Media to automate application updates, resulting in shortened release cycles, application configuration alignment, and automated updates across groups. This means the company can ensure its server and application configurations are consistent across environments by tracking application compliance in each environment against a distributed application policy model. All deployment actions can be authorized based on user roles, ensuring appropriate levels

of user access. If necessary, deployments also can be rolled back easily. “We can also automate the rollout of applications themselves — even for deployments that consist of complex, multi-tier changes, such as sequenced updates of Web, application, and database servers. The net result of these capabilities is shortened release cycles, allowing Virgin Media to achieve faster time to market,” says Matt Wills, Build and Environment Manager for Mobile Delivery.

There is tangible evidence too of the difference BMC BladeLogic is making. For example, Virgin Media had a major release late last year for 11 new Web services. The team estimated that it would take an average of up to 30 minutes to deploy each one of 20 configuration items per Web service deployment. Using BMC BladeLogic however, this was reduced to only six minutes. These savings might not seem immense, but in fact Virgin Media had 201 deployments to complete altogether which means the company saved almost eight days of IT management time by automating the deployment process.

Application quality has also been transformed, as Wills explains. “With 20 configuration items for each of the 11 Web services, there was a huge potential for manual errors arising. By automating the application release management process and associated workflows, those errors were eliminated; and Virgin Media benefits from increased data center stability and enhanced service quality.”

Looking ahead, up to 90 percent of applications in the company’s Mobile Delivery channel will use BMC BladeLogic. Faced with the demand to monitor on-going compliance with the credit card industry’s PCI DSS (Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard), Virgin Media is evaluating the use of BMC BladeLogic to automate the system-level and system-wide configuration changes required to ensure PCI compliance.

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MATT WILLS  
BUILD AND ENVIRONMENT MANAGER FOR MOBILE DELIVERY

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#### **APPLICATION RELEASES WERE TIME CONSUMING AND HARD TO MANAGE**

In this complex, diversified environment, one of the challenges has been the automation of many server management processes. Previously, the company’s entire application environment was managed manually — the result being that application releases were time consuming and hard to manage. Moreover, it was difficult to ensure the continual compliance of applications to corporate build,

security, and configuration policies. And in the event of a problem, the IT team had to dedicate a large amount of time and resources to resolving it.

The road to choosing the BMC BladeLogic data center configuration toolset began with an urgent need to address a middleware challenge. Virgin Media needed to implement an ‘Information Bus’, a universal messaging solution that would allow the firm’s strategic applications to communicate with one another — across 50 servers in a short period. Some of the servers previously had been deployed manually: a time-consuming process that might not also ensure configuration compliance of the server environment.

A rigorous feature set assessment was carried out, based on Virgin Media’s requirements as well as a cost-benefit analysis. BMC BladeLogic solution was the favoured solution, based on the low investment cost and the savings in deployment, compared with implementing the manual solution. The outcome was that the IT team easily met the deadline for the middleware deployment across

multiple environments, saving man hours and licensing costs. On average, application deployment time on a single server decreased from six hours to 30 minutes.

Moreover, Virgin Media was able to establish baselines to address configuration and compliance issues, while human error in the application deployment was eliminated, and the application teams were freed up to concentrate on their core strengths rather than deployment efforts. It used to take up to 90 minutes to deploy a web based application build, but we're now completing that in just a few minutes. Over the last 11 months, we're completed over 30 builds — which is equivalent to 55 hours time saving," said Wills."

### **IMPROVING DATA CENTER STABILITY AND SERVICE QUALITY**

Since that initial success, the BMC BladeLogic automation software has helped Virgin Media manage, control, and enforce configuration changes to improve its data center stability and service quality. The solution is also helping to decrease application downtime, increase IT productivity, and reduce data center operating costs. This is nowhere more so than in the complex, large-scale test and development environments. This comprises nine environments altogether, with approximately 20 servers per environment. The IT team supports up to 53 bespoke applications or components here — each of which has up to 30 configurable sections. All of this makes change control management nothing short of a nightmare, with some components changing only once per year, while others change once per week or more frequently.

The principal role for Wills is to take deliverables from the development team and launch them into the control/test environments. For him, BMC BladeLogic minimizes the time, resources, and cost involved in manually supporting change control and release management. "In the past we would have sent paper-based build notes to the Change Management team to process. These would be passed onto the Operations team for subsequent deployment. The net result was errors, a lack of responsibility, and a time-consuming process."

All of this has changed using BMC BladeLogic Operations Manager and BMC BladeLogic Application Release Manager suite of data center automation products. A policy-based approach means that changes are now applied to a policy, and then synchronized with the target servers. This bi-directional approach helps Virgin Media significantly reduce the cost and errors associated with managing its server infrastructure by ensuring that changes are target-specific and that users have visibility into all prior changes before new ones are made. "The Properties Dictionary is an invaluable tool in the configuration," says Wills. "For example, with one of our configuration files, the developer accidentally copied and pasted the configuration value with an extra space. It took us days to work out the problem; whereas all we needed to do was look in the Properties Dictionary to see the correct configuration values."

Wills concludes, "There's no doubt that the BMC BladeLogic data center automation solutions have made a fundamental difference to the way Virgin Media manages, controls and enforces configuration changes. We do expect a lot from the solution, and here we use the phrase, 'It's not blade magic, it's BladeLogic.'"

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## ABOUT VIRGIN MEDIA

With almost 10 million customers, Virgin Media is the UK's first quad-play provider of broadband, TV, phone and mobile. The company is the largest residential broadband provider in the UK and has the UK's most advanced TV on demand service and is the only TV platform to carry BBC iPlayer. The company operates the most popular virtual mobile network in the UK which, when launched, was the world's first such mobile phone service. It is also one of the largest fixed-line home phone providers in the country.

## BUSINESS RUNS ON IT. IT RUNS ON BMC SOFTWARE.

Business thrives when IT runs smarter, faster and stronger. That's why the most demanding IT organizations in the world rely on BMC Software across both mainframe and distributed environments. Recognized as the leader in Business Service Management, BMC offers a comprehensive approach and unified platform that helps IT organizations cut cost, reduce risk and drive business profit. For the four fiscal quarters ended Dec. 31, 2008, BMC revenue was approximately \$1.88 billion. Visit [www.bmc.com](http://www.bmc.com) for more information.

