

## Hitachi Storage Solutions at Work

### Easynet Group

**INDUSTRY** Services: Internet Services Provider (ISP)

**SOLUTIONS** Consolidation/Simplification

**Hardware**—Hitachi TagmaStore® Adaptable Modular Storage model AMS200

**Software**—Hitachi Hi-Track® “call-home” service/remote maintenance tool and Hitachi HiCommand® Dynamic Link Manager software

**Services**—Provided by Hitachi Data Systems and Partner Omega Peripherals



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*Anthony Stanton  
Technical Director  
Easynet Spain*



Superbly managed networks and hosting



# Internet Service Provider Now Hosts with the Most, Thanks to Hitachi Modular Storage

Europe's Easynet Group is quickly laying thousands of miles of Fibre Channel connectivity for Internet users across the continent. Meeting the high-speed managed network and hosting needs of customers requires resilient storage area network (SAN) capabilities. Easynet called in Hitachi TagmaStore® Adaptable Modular Storage to do the job of seamlessly scaling and securing operations.

As Internet service providers (ISPs) know, being boundaryless and being seamless do not always go hand in hand: extending networks across larger service areas often increases the difficulty of ensuring consistency and reliability. For Easynet Group, a pioneer in delivering unified network coverage across Europe, not being hindered by geography is critical to delivering a full portfolio of IP, broadband, VPN, and hosting services throughout the United Kingdom and Europe.

## Coming Unbundled

Easynet's coverage extends to 250 major cities over nearly 4,500 kilometers of dense, fiber-optic multiplexing architecture used to support hundreds of high-speed wavelengths. The company has successfully implemented local loop unbundling (LLU) processes, which allow customers to directly connect to broadband services—and bypass local telcos—at competitive prices. Easynet currently operates

hundreds of local telephone exchanges to provide Internet services to nearly 5 million homes and 700,000 businesses.

While LLU services are gaining in popularity, they are also acquiring more regulatory requirements than bundled lines. The challenge of meeting these mounting data-retention mandates was surpassed only by the demands for greater infrastructure to support Easynet's fast-growing lines of customer business: managed networks, security solutions, and hosting services. For Anthony Stanton, technical director of Easynet Spain, the importance of providing a buoyant and reliable IT environment to support the company's business activities—and ultimately Easynet customers—was unparalleled.

“Data storage plays a vital role for us, especially in the area of managed hosting, since it allows Easynet to provide a value-added

service and sets us apart from the competition,” says Stanton. “We had isolated direct attached storage (DAS), limited scalability, and not nearly enough flexibility to meet the enormity of impending growth, regulations, and complexity rapidly overtaking our infrastructure. We needed dial-tone reliability and mouse-click simplicity, and we needed them right away.”

## Going Central

While Easynet offered its clients one of Europe's most advanced communications networks, internally, the company needed to revisit its data storage infrastructure. Stanton inventoried the siloed DAS environment, finding a vast number of servers with storage that was either maxed out or underutilized. Simply expanding the capacity of these current systems was not going to solve the storage growth challenges; it would just make things more complex. Each DAS server required regular monitoring and visits by IT staff for upgrades and maintenance, and, without centralized storage, backup of DAS servers also taxed the manual reach of system administrators.

Because of these labor-intensive management tasks, administrators were unable to efficiently or effectively manage more than 300GB each. Expected exponential data growth and impending data retention requirements cried out for consolidation, centralization, and simplification of the storage architecture.

As a service provider, Easynet had to center its IT strategy on client demands rather than on internal needs. Stanton was focused on finding a vendor solution that would viably sustain the network needs of Easynet's clients. After thoroughly evaluating proposals from several well-known storage manufacturers, Stanton made his selection.

“Hitachi Data Systems was the winner, hands down. We liked Hitachi's modular storage design and the Hitachi Data Systems quality/price ratio for services. It was clear that we could easily and endlessly scale our operations along Hitachi's comprehensive technology road map,” says Stanton.

## Scaling Storage

Working with the Hitachi Data Systems team and Hitachi reseller Omega Peripherals, Easynet implemented a SAN based on the Hitachi TagmaStore® Adaptable Modular Storage model AMS200. Chosen for its proven ability to seamlessly scale and meet demanding availability and retention requirements, the AMS200 has easily and immediately adapted to the constant increase in Easynet's data volumes and customer storage hosting requirements. Geared to centralize and optimize disparate storage through consolidation, the AMS200 at Easynet was configured with an installed capacity of 34TB. Because the AMS200 can accommodate and protect significant amounts of data, Stanton was also able to implement business continuity policies that did not exist universally in the DAS environment.



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Anthony Stanton  
Technical Director  
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Easynet obtained a highly flexible storage platform that Stanton believes has enabled the company to offer its customers robust hosting services at the best prices using best-in-class Hitachi technology. Hitachi HiCommand® Dynamic Link Manager software paves the thoroughfare for Easynet's 24/7 data availability needs, with host path failover/failback and automatic load balancing to avoid congestion and bottlenecks, ensure active routing and data access, and boost workload performance. The Dynamic Link Manager software's easy-to-use graphical user interface (GUI) tools guide operations and help to simplify IT management. The AMS200 also offers a built-in confidence booster for administrators with

Hitachi Hi-Track® “call-home” service/remote maintenance tool, a proactive notification service that sends failure-warning messages and alerts Hitachi Data Systems customer support when assistance is required.

“We found the Hitachi Data Systems solution to be very superior technically, and the reliability and monitoring characteristics of the modular storage give us confidence in the SAN,” says Stanton.

## Supporting Seamlessness

Easynet's introduction to Fibre Channel SAN has been a good one. The AMS200 still has ample storage capacity to support the company through exploding data growth, as well as offering ease of management. Already, Stanton's IT team members are each able to manage dozens of terabytes without headaches or manual tasking. The company is

saving on many person-hours each month by not having to provide routine maintenance or support for individual DAS systems.

Critical to the success of the storage redesign was the ability to provide end-to-end services and support to Easynet's customers, for their managed networks, hosting, and security solutions, such as VPN operations. The AMS200 provides the resiliency and performance to meet those expectations with intelligent Hitachi automation, proactive monitoring, and backup safeguards. And when it's time to extend the storage network, either horizontally or vertically, the Hitachi Data Systems technology product road map will enable Easynet to flexibly keep pace with its spreading enterprise.

“We are really able to appreciate the Hitachi SAN solution in our daily management of the system. Work that used to take hours or days now either is automated or requires a quick click on the keyboard. And knowing that we have plenty of virtual room to grow, both reliably and easily, gives us a comfort level most growing companies only dream of,” says Stanton.

## About Omega Peripherals

Omega Peripherals specializes in the design, implementation, management, security, and support of intelligent systems and enterprise infrastructure. With a focus on product research and testing, and value-added professional services, Omega Peripherals provides integration and maintenance solutions along with excellent quality levels.

Omega Peripherals has a working philosophy of constantly seeking emergent technologies that help to solve or improve issues that IT departments everywhere tend to battle. That is one of the reasons that Omega Peripherals has forged a long-term partner relationship with Hitachi Data Systems, helping to bring technological, product, and service leadership to the marketplace.

Omega Peripherals is headquartered in Spain. For more information, please visit [www.omega-peripherals.com](http://www.omega-peripherals.com)

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