

IRIS OpenHosting

Joe Sole builds new practice on IRIS OpenHosting

When Joe Sole decided to set up his own chartered accountancy practice in early 2010, he chose an IRIS Hosting solution for his IT platform.

Joe had been in practice for twenty years before setting up Sole Associates in West Byfleet, Surrey. Launching a business in a tough economic climate was a brave decision, but one which has clearly paid dividends. Within a few months, Joe had a team of seven and a healthy, diverse client base.

A new beginning

Joe had come across IRIS in his previous partnership and had been keen to adopt the company's software. However, his fellow partners were reluctant to migrate, despite the difficulties being experienced with the major competitor's software then in place.

Joe says, "Having seen a demo of IRIS, I'd been impressed by the integration inherent in the software and the efficiencies this brings in eliminating multiple data entry. So, when I opened up my own practice, it was always going to IRIS!"

When IRIS suggested implementing a hosted solution, Joe realised that this would offer all the functionality he needed without the effort and expense associated with recruiting internal resources or managing an IT infrastructure. "We evaluated the hosting option carefully and could see that it would remove the day-to-day problems which always occur with any IT environment."

Hosting also offered budgeting advantages: "In the first instance, we would avoid having to make a large, upfront capital investment in IT. In the longer term, we'd eliminate the work of refreshing the technology and keeping different parts of the infrastructure in sync."

The solution

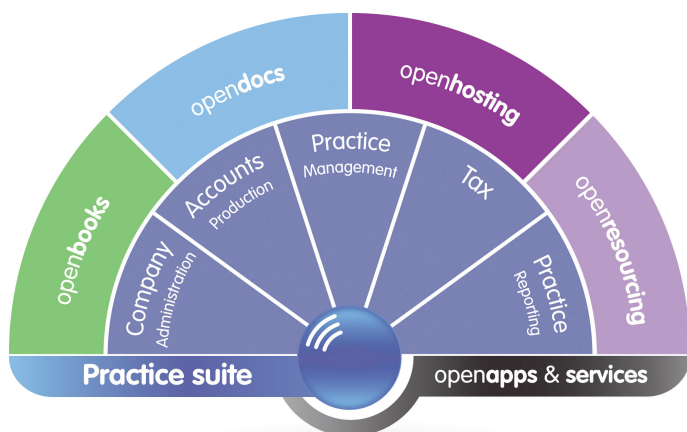
IRIS OpenDocs is the system built by IRIS and Invu that automatically files all your accountancy practice documents as you work, whether that is a set of Final Accounts, or a letter sent to remind the client to send in the paperwork for their tax return. This not only saves you time, but also frees up the office space.

The system not only files the document against the right client, but also by the correct category, e.g. accounts, tax, payroll, general correspondence etc., this makes all documents easily and quickly accessible when you need to retrieve or refer to them. If you are searching by client, you can use the IRIS Communications tab within IRIS Practice Management, or you can use the fast Invu search facilities that are available.

Fast off the starting-blocks

With the decision made to run his own practice, Joe commissioned IRIS to start building the IT environment and, by the time Sole Associates opened for business, the infrastructure was in place and ready to go.

As Joe acknowledges, "Starting up a business felt like looking over the edge of a cliff. I valued the support that IRIS provided. It all went fantastically well. The initial problems that are inevitable in any significant IT project were soon ironed out and everything settled into place very quickly. Today, there's a startling contrast between the smooth-running IT we have at Sole Associates with the recurring problems we had in my previous practice."



“Without a hosted solution, dealing with IT issues would take at least a day a month of my time and a couple of days for a member of staff. We probably save about £200 a month on IT maintenance and, on average, about £3,000 per year on ad hoc IT issues.”

Improved data security and access

Joe is well aware of the responsibility to safeguard client data and has the assurance of knowing that the datacentre used by IRIS provides the highest levels of security. He comments, "Security is a big factor. When you have a piece of kit holding client data sitting in the office, you're in a very vulnerable position. Even with mirrored hard drives, you're still at risk. We feel we're doing the very best in caring for our clients by having their data securely hosted off-site."

The resilience of the business is improved, too, through IRIS Hosting: "If the building burnt down, we'd be able to decamp to another location, such as a serviced office, start up our laptops and keep the business going. It's one less thing to worry about."

With a hosted solution, location is no barrier to securely accessing the practice software. Joe has the convenience of being able to log in when he goes back to his roots in a remote Sicilian village or takes his son to football practice. He says, "It gives me enormous freedom."

Supporting the business vision

Joe's aim is to grow his business strategically by targeting specific types of client. He says, "We can concentrate on expanding the business and providing the excellent client care that is building our reputation. Without a hosted solution, dealing with IT issues would take at least a day a month of my time and a couple of days for a member of staff. We probably save about £200 a month on IT maintenance and, on average, about £3,000 per year on ad hoc IT issues."

Expanding the Sole Associates team is more cost-efficient, too: "We save about £1,000 in taking on a new employee because they don't need a high specification PC and associated software. It allows us to scale our operations up and down, depending on staff levels, as we pay per user per month."

As Joe notes, "In a growing practice, efficiencies like this make a huge difference."

In the years ahead, Joe knows the technology underlying the practice will be regularly refreshed. He comments, "I don't believe in making do with ageing technology, so this approach suits my philosophy very well and, again, we avoid the cost of paying £12,000 to buy and set up a new server every three or four years."

He continues to value the support provided behind the scenes by IRIS: "We definitely regard IRIS as our long-term partner. They are an integral part of the way we work."

Key benefits of IRIS Hosting

- Hosted and managed IRIS software
- Resources are free to focus on client care and growing the business
- No upfront capital investment required
- Technology regularly updated by professionals with expert market knowledge
- Reduced risk through improved data security and business continuity

For more information regarding IRIS Practice Hosting please call **0844 815 5555** or email **practicesales@iris.co.uk**



“Starting up a business felt like looking over the edge of a cliff. I valued the support that IRIS provided. It all went fantastically well.”