From Domino to Microsoft 365
A legacy system migration success story

At a glance:

Client: UK-based land remediation experts

Industry: Infrastructure engineering

Location: UK

Services provided: Migrating Lotus Notes and IBM Domino infrastructure onto the corporate Microsoft 365 platform

Total data migrated: 1.17 TB

Total document count: 2,356,685

Lotus Notes user mail files: 70

Mail-in databases: 461

Archive mail files: 13

The client:

Based in Leeds in the UK, our client provides essential engineering services to maintain and renew critical infrastructure networks. Their multidisciplinary engineering services are delivered through independently branded UK subsidiary businesses that come under the same umbrella.

The need:

The company has acquired multiple companies over the years: All but one of which had already migrated to their Microsoft 365 tenant.

An industry leader in ground remediation services - overcoming the challenges of working with contaminated land and soil – was yet to migrate to our client's main corporate tenant.

Our client was hosted on an IBM Domino infrastructure: Lotus Notes and IBM Domino server. Operating on different systems made seamless collaboration and communication between this entity and its parent company a challenge – but the team had been reluctant to make the switch.

It was time to bring them into the fold: to modernise the company's infrastructure and welcome in a new era of collaborative, streamlined and successful business operations.

Saving time and headspace with a turnkey solution

Once both the Systems Manager and the company's project team had become convinced of the deep level of migration expertise and experience of Conrad Murray and the Nero Blanco team, they were happy to trust the migration specialists to proceed with the project with minimal intervention and involvement.

It was a smart decision that freed up the client's team to focus on other operational priorities.

Having the ability to inspire this level of trust in the businesses and organisations they work with makes life easier for Nero Blanco. The greater the trust, the higher the level of access and responsibility afforded to them – which ultimately means more gets done, and faster.

It's a win–win: the migration progresses quicker than when decision by committee is the order of the day, and the migrating businesses achieve their objectives faster and more efficiently.

Trust and deliver

No one within the new IT support team had in-depth knowledge of migrating Lotus Notes to Microsoft 365. Combining this with his own involvement in other projects, the client company's Systems Manager, wanted a turnkey solution to perform the migration project.

Achieving this required complete trust and faith in the business chosen to handle the project… which is where Nero Blanco comes in.

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The solution:

Carrying out the migration in a single cutover event would eliminate the need for directory synchronisation and rich co-existence.

After an in-depth discovery process, the teams agreed that the migration from Domino to the Renew Microsoft 365 tenant would be carried out in four stages:

- **Stage 1:** Replication of all on-premises mail files to the staging server, hosted in Azure.
- **Stage 2:** Early adopters, archived mail-in databases (shared mailboxes) and other non-active mailboxes.
- **Stage 3:** The weekend cutover event.
- **Stage 4:** Remaining historical data for all mail files.

Dealing with the challenge of slow throughput

On-premises migrations to Microsoft 365 are notoriously slow and constrained by many factors. With 1.17 terabytes of data to migrate, Nero Blanco recommended using servers hosted in Azure and a Domino staging server to speed up the throughput.

The team built and configured a migration farm in the Nero Blanco Azure tenant and installed a new dedicated Domino staging server to host optimised replicated data.

Configuration and set-up

Carrying out the migration in a single cutover event would eliminate the need for directory synchronisation and rich co-existence.

With each of the 461 projects having its own mail-in database, this led to an unusually high number of shared mailboxes to be created in Exchange Online, along with the associated permissions.

Traditionally in migration projects, the source target clients create their own target accounts. In this case, Nero Blanco took the reins.

They created the migration service accounts, configured the migration server and ensured all user accounts were correctly configured for routing in both Exchange Online and Domino.

Lotus Notes and IBM Domino Server to Microsoft 365: the migration

- **Stage 1**: Building the Azure-hosted staging server and starting the data replication.
- **Stage 2:** Took place in November 2023. Once the test migration was complete – using members of the IT team as volunteers – it was time for stage 3.
- **Stage 3:** The last 30 days of emails for all remaining users – plus active mail-in databases, calendar, contacts and tasks – were migrated over a single cutover weekend. Email routing was reconfigured to deliver Exchange Online, and all users were up and running by Monday
- **Stage 4:** The final delta second pass migration of all remaining data was completed during the week after the cutover event.

The final email from Lotus Notes was sent on the day of the migration, while the first email sent to staff in Outlook contained useful information to get them up and running, as well as details of who to contact in case of any queries.

The client's project team were on hand to support staff throughout the transition.

The enhanced level of autonomy given to Nero Blanco on this project meant clear communication and progress reporting were more vital than ever, and regular meetings combined with Teams and Outlook updates took place throughout.

The results:

The autonomous approach to the project made it extremely satisfying to work on – and the client was delighted with the results. The client's team were a pleasure to work with, and the migration progressed both smoothly and seamlessly.

As well as benefiting from brand new infrastructure, the acquired entity now collaborates and communicates seamlessly with their parent company.

Extend your IT team with Nero Blanco

Imagine having Nero Blanco's expertise and experience on tap whenever and wherever you need it. Your internal IT team do a good job of day-to-day helpdesk provision and occasional larger projects, but you need a strategic partner to handle more complex plans, to ensure you're leveraging the best that Microsoft has to offer, and to keep your organisation running smoothly and efficiently.

If you'd like to benefit from ongoing support and expertise, **get in touch with us today**. We'd love to talk you through the ways we can help to unify your organisation.

The benefits of working with Nero Blanco:

- **Flexible service:** a fresh approach to IT that's designed around your business
- **Technical expertise on tap:** no more struggling with IT challenges
- **Responsive and fast:** we're there when you need us
- **Affordable solution:** a cost-effective way to outsource your IT function
- **Fully scalable:** increase your level of support as your business grows
- **Reassurance:** we make complex things simple
- **Peace of mind:** with over 50 years of combined experience, there's not a challenge we haven't overcome.