

CASE STUDY

How the Department for Education ensured business continuity after adopting a SaaS data management solution hosted within AWS.

The Standards and Testing Agency (STA) is an executive agency of the UK Government's Department for Education (DfE). STA set the tests to assess children in education from early years to the end of primary school. In order to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the test development process, STA contracted Texuna Technologies which specialises in data management solutions to develop ItemBank, a robust and secure data management system.

“ Escrow London provided us with a clear implementation program for the Replicated SaaS Continuity solution that was put in place on behalf of our client, the DfE. During the verification exercises, the Escrow London team of AWS consultants worked diligently alongside our developers to ensure that the replicated environments were fully functional meeting the expectations of our client. We will be happy to work with Escrow London again going forward. ”

ItemBank Team, Texuna Technologies



Background

As part of the DfE strategy to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their test development process, they contracted Texuna to implement a specialised data management solution.

The original system was deployed in 2012 as an on-premise solution. At that time, as part of the DfE's risk management process, they requested for Texuna to deposit the source code of the system with a different software escrow vendor.

Over the years, Texuna has innovated their system and migrated it over to Amazon Web Services (AWS) to take advantage of the efficiency and data security that the AWS cloud platform provides.

The DfE risk assessment team identified that relying on a cloud hosted application had some inherent risks and they would require a more advanced software escrow arrangement. In order to provide an assured level of business continuity and to mitigate against these risks, the DfE published a tender for a new contract to provide a full continuity solution within AWS.

After a thorough review of GCloud 10 approved software escrow vendors, Escrow London were awarded the new SaaS Escrow contract to provide a comprehensive and secure SaaS Escrow solution.

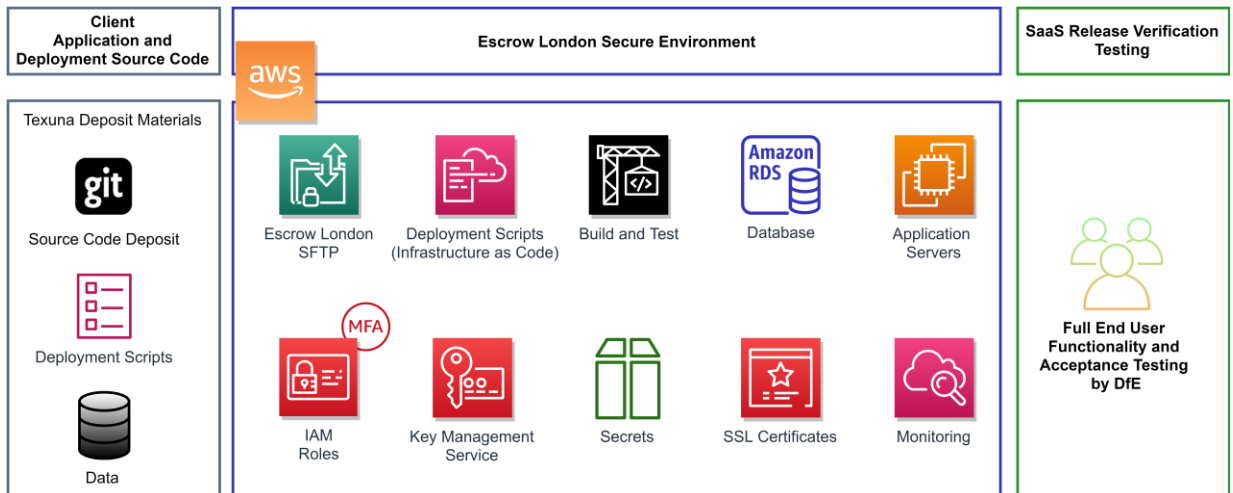


Solution

The Escrow London team of AWS certified architects and code specialists consulted with the DfE to implement a bespoke Replicated SaaS Continuity solution that best addressed their concerns. The main aim was to provide the DfE with complete continuity in the unlikely event of a release scenario. Several critical instances needed to be protected and replicated. The final implemented solution includes:

- Complete source code deposit of the Texuna ItemBank application.
- Scheduled deposit of an encrypted copy of the DfE ItemBank database.
- Deposit of the Texuna AWS cloud environment.
- Full Verification test on the source code to ensure that it can be built into the working application.
- SaaS Release Verification to demonstrate that Escrow London has the ability to deploy and host a replicated ItemBank environment including the DfE database within a dedicated Escrow London AWS account.
- Vendor Financial Monitoring that provides the beneficiary with pre-emptive alerts if there are any irregularities with the payments to AWS.

Escrow London and Texuna collaborated to ensure that all the required source code, databases, detailed build documentation and AWS instances were available to be securely deposited. Two in-depth verification exercises were then conducted as part of the Replicated SaaS Continuity solution to successfully confirm that the deposited source code was full and complete and that the ItemBank application was replicated successfully within the dedicated Escrow London AWS environment.



Success

The secondary environment hosted by Escrow London within their AWS account was successfully deployed during the SaaS release verification exercise. Representatives of the DfE were invited to join the testing session via Webex allowing them to fully test the functionality of the replicated environment from the comfort of their own office.

In the unlikely event of a release, Escrow London will deploy the replicated AWS environment, connect the most recent backup set and provide a dedicated URL for the DfE to seamlessly access the secondary environment providing full business continuity. In addition to the replicated environment, the DfE will have full access to the verified source code providing additional assurance.

The DfE and Texuna have both benefited from the Replicated SaaS Continuity solution implemented by Escrow London. The DfE have been able to adopt industry leading technology hosted within AWS with the full assurance that they comply with their business continuity objectives. Texuna has excelled in delivering innovative data management solutions and the Escrow London Replicated SaaS Continuity solution provides their clients with comfort that they will always be protected.

To learn more about Escrow London's SaaS Escrow Solutions, please contact us:
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