Unlocking the power of the platform:

Atlassian managed services for
John Lewis Partnership

CASE STUDY RETAIL

Beginning with the design and roll-out of a comprehensive platform for Atlassian tools in 2013, Adaptavist has built a long-standing relationship with John Lewis Partnership (JLP), one of the UK's flagship retail groups.

Today, this platform supports over 2,000 users across the Partnership's technical and business teams, and is the backbone of a fully managed service delivered by Adaptavist. The service spans day-to-day back-end management, SLA-backed support to avoid performance issues, and ongoing maintenance to ensure the tools can scale and meet evolving business needs. This includes enhancing native Jira functionality with Adaptavist apps ScriptRunner and Test Management for Jira, which help John Lewis Partnership get the most from their Atlassian platform.

Requirements at a glance

A capable partner
to deliver the implementation and ongoing management of a complete Atlassian suite of tools

Very high system utilisation
underpinned by reliable SLAs, support capability, and robust disaster recovery provision

Ongoing consultancy
to ensure tools can scale and meet evolving business needs

Replacement of legacy testing tools
with modern, Jira-compatible technology

The ability to automate
more complex Jira configuration requests to manage user needs

The solution

A bespoke managed services platform backed by a comprehensive support package, Adaptavist apps, and consultation to ensure long-term tool scaling and optimisation.

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Results at a glance

99.9% uptime

Ensuring reliability for
2,000 Jira users

Successful continuous scaling

that ensures tools are always fit for purpose

A seamless and transparent approach to test management

with the implementation of
Test Management for Jira

Capability to automate an average of

20 complex configuration requests

each week with
ScriptRunner for Jira

Increased collaboration

across retailers
and departments,
driving greater productivity

FLEXIBILITY

Flexibility has been greatly enhanced, delivering expedited tool functionality changes based on user demand.

About John Lewis Partnership

The John Lewis Partnership owns and operates two of Britain's best-loved retail brands – John Lewis & Partners and Waitrose & Partners. Started as a radical idea nearly a century ago, the Partnership is now the largest employee-owned business in the UK, with 83,900 employees who are all Partners in the business and share in its profits.

The Partnership operates on strong democratic principles, which means that every Partner has a say in how the organisation is run. The business has annual gross sales of over £11.7bn, 400 shops and a leading online business. Its commercial strategy is focused on differentiation rather than scale, through investment in innovation and Partner-led service.

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The challenge

Prior to engaging with Adaptavist, John Lewis Partnership (JLP) was using cloud versions of Jira and the agile tool Greenhopper, which had been introduced by external companies working on johnlewis.com. Due to changes around Greenhopper, the team decided to move to Jira Server. The prospect of doing so, however, raised a host of questions.

"We faced all kinds of considerations," explains Claire Nelson, Partner & Methods and Tools Technical Lead for John Lewis Partnership. "Where would the servers be located? Which internal teams would be managing them? What benefits could we access by having an expert look after our tools?"

This prompted the team to source a strategic delivery partner to manage the new system – one that could offer hosting, support, and consultancy expertise across the Atlassian suite. JLP also sought greater control over both its Atlassian apps and service level agreements (SLAs), and wanted a partner that could help them derive maximum value from the tools.

The team shortlisted three Atlassian accredited partners, with Adaptavist emerging as frontrunner due its passion for the Atlassian toolset and close links to the Atlassian team.

And with that, a partnership was born.

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The solution

The engagement commenced with a series of workshops structured to identify JLP's requirements. By adopting an open, transparent approach, Adaptavist ensured that stakeholders had a clear understanding of the platform being built and how it would benefit their teams.

"A key requirement for us was minimal business interruption," Claire explains. "We wanted people to come in on the launch Monday and start working without

noticing anything different. Any filters, dashboard favourites, and profile information should look exactly how users had left them when they signed off on the Friday. That was very important." It was also, as Claire points out, "amazingly hard work to achieve."

As well as building out the platform, Adaptavist mapped the profile of each individual user in order to meet JLP's stringent information security requirements. "The amount of work that went on is another example where Adaptavist showed how great they are. They did a lot of background housekeeping work for basically no gain, and it was very complicated," Claire continues.

But this work was worthwhile – on the day of the launch around 500 users smoothly transitioned over to the new platform. Here they could quickly and easily share information, access the full range of Atlassian apps, and complete work efficiently any time, from anywhere.

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Seamless collaboration is a key benefit for users, as Claire explains: "You can put anything on there – it's a great way to share knowledge and get work done when you're not sitting next to the person you're working with." The platform also hosts all of JLP's operating processes, ensuring that all users across businesses and departments can easily find and adhere to standardised protocols.

To ensure high availability, an SLA of 99.9% uptime is in place – a target that is regularly assessed to ensure consistency. The entire system is also backed up with a robust disaster recovery solution, giving JLP peace of mind.

Keeping pace with demand

Since the roll-out, all other Jira Cloud instances have been merged into the new platform, which Claire says has evolved into "a pan-Partnership tool with 2,000-plus users" across John Lewis & Partners and Waitrose & Partners IT, alongside other business departments.

"Each of these teams have different requirements," she explains, "so we use Adaptavist and their experience to make sure we're supporting them to use the tools in the most productive way."

Given this scale of adoption, it's essential that the tools can integrate seamlessly with each other, while remaining simple for everyone to use. To support this,

Adaptavist continues to handle day-to-day platform management, delivering a quality service that sees issues and questions met the same day they are raised, regardless of SLA priority.

"Accessing support from people throughout the organisation is a huge value-add," Claire notes. "Dedicated teams and low turnover mean that if an issue comes up more than once, we have continuity and don't have to sift through historical tickets. The team knows the system inside out so whenever there is an issue, they know exactly where to look.

"When you're trying to keep 2,000 users happy, there will always be people who need something resolved instantaneously," she continues. "Adaptavist will always answer the questions and go back until the user has said, 'Yes, I'm happy.'"

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A pragmatic approach

The JLP team receives a detailed report each month covering tickets that have been raised and closed, and meets twice-yearly to lay out a six-month roadmap. A retrospective examining how JLP's teams have matured in this time helps ensure that the tools continue to meet user needs, while also highlighting areas for ongoing optimisation. This has led to demand-driven projects including a migration to a higher specification server for Jira in response to growing user numbers.

"The team always talks us through how to action requests in a seamless way that doesn't affect our users", Claire says. "It was a completely smooth transition over to the new server."

Another recent project is the implementation of Adaptavist's Umbrella SSO single sign-on app for centralised logins, which has streamlined access and reduced admin burden. "It also helps us ensure off-boarding meets compliance needs, which is a key consideration for the business," she explains.

Going beyond out-of-the-box

As Atlassian software usage has continued to evolve, Adaptavist provides ongoing consultancy and advice to help the JLP make sure users are getting the most from the platform, every day.

This has included moving away from legacy standalone tools to apps that integrate with Jira and allow teams to work more seamlessly. In turning to the Atlassian Marketplace, the team found that "Adaptavist apps really stand out".

A key focus was test management, which relied on expensive tools with increasingly outdated functionality.

"We had some once-popular tools like Quality Center, but they were expensive for the benefits they offered. We needed something more modern and cost-effective," says Hector Lira, Test Lead, for John Lewis Partnership.

"We moved to TestRail as a bridge, and while it gave us some desperately-needed features, it still wasn't enough — what we needed was a tool that fully integrated with Jira. That's where we found Adaptavist Test Management for Jira (TM4J)."

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We love that Adaptavist is responsive and open to suggestions to continually improve the product.

The team evaluated TM4J, with a direct comparison revealing comparable functionality with the added advantage of full integration with Jira. Following a successful reception, TestRail has now been decommissioned, with all assets migrated across to TM4J. Use of Quality Center is also being brought to a close.

"Full integration into Jira means there's no separate login required — this minimises user administration overhead" says Hector. Other highlights for the team are the user-friendly interface for simple test creation, the ability to import test cases from existing tools, and better visibility of testing activity and results across teams.

JLP also benefits from continued involvement as the app develops: "We love that Adaptavist is responsive and open to suggestions to continually improve the product. We're able to have open conversations and are happy to be on board as you test your roadmap" Hector continues.

The power of automation

With the platform's growing number of diverse users, dealing with demand for customisation became another challenge for the team.

"We were using Jira's default workflows, but this out-of-the box capability was very canned. It meant that people couldn't see the real benefit of Jira, which was very one-size-fits-all when people wanted clever workflows and smarter email notifications," Claire explains.

With increasing requests for customisations, the team looked to the Marketplace for automation capability. They opted for ScriptRunner as it "stood out by a mile as the best option." The app was integrated and has since been accepted in what Hector describes as a "really natural, organic way".

By enabling quick and easy customisation of projects, Adaptavist ScriptRunner has helped users across the Partnership understand how the new system can work for them, delivering great value from the tools. Extra functionality in filters also helps teams be more productive by making it simple to extract essential information from tickets.

"It's also well supported, with fantastic documentation," Claire continues. "As an Adaptavist app customer we're fully supported with upgrades, which gives us real peace of mind."

Ongoing support from the ScriptRunner team has been instrumental in ensuring the Partnership continues to use the app to its full potential, as Claire explains: "Recently we were in a position where we knew there were lots of features we were using, but also lots that we weren't. It's great to be able to spend time with the team to make sure we're using the tool properly and making most of the functionality."

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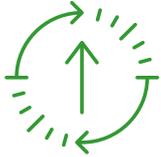
Near 100% uptime for users

Access to guidance to manage system issues and improvements, alongside ongoing monitoring, ensures **nearly 100% uptime for users,** Claire explains. "It also means we can give users expedited use of functionality that they require, helping them make the most of their tools and get stuff done in ways that work for them."

Ongoing consultation ensures that JLP is always **optimising its tools** and staying one step ahead as the business continues to evolve – including the streamlining and tightening of access rights and security.

Jira admins now successfully manage around 20 advanced configuration requests each week with ScriptRunner's automation capabilities, and **testing has become more simple and transparent** with the addition of TM4J, removing roadblocks and helping teams to release faster. "Adaptavist's apps have also helped us ensure that all required information reaches the right teams on the first time," Claire offers. "As back and forth checks are no longer required, teams save time and become more efficient."

New approach to collaboration

Another unique benefit for the JLP team is the **reciprocal nature of the collaboration**. "We have an honest relationship with two-way communication. Adaptavist shares advice, areas for improvement and best practice and in turn, listens to us when we feed back and contribute to product roadmaps. That's really built up trust. The success of the partnership all comes down to honesty of both sides." Claire concludes.

Moving ahead, JLP is keen to add more process around day-to-day housekeeping of the platform and further explore the potential of automation – all while continuing to operate technology that teams across the Partnership love to use.

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