

NEWS UK CONTINUES TO PUBLISH NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS FOLLOWING NIGHT OF TERRORIST ATROCITY IN LONDON BRIDGE



Staff at News UK's London Bridge office found themselves at the centre of one of 2017's biggest news stories — a combined vehicle ramming and stabbing attack by terrorists. As well as having a duty to keep staff safe from harm, the publisher had an obligation to its readers to continue reporting the news despite potential business interruptions.

Production of daily newspapers is a 24/7 operation involving many interdependent processes and critical timings. Despite the huge potential for disruption, with the help of its business continuity partner [Sungard Availability Services](#), [News UK](#) was able to publish all editions and formats of the Sunday Times and The Sun on Sunday, and then daily editions of The Times and Sun in full and on time after the attacks when their London Bridge HQ was in lock-down and inaccessible.

RESULTS

- Efficient, targeted communications to ensure employees were safe and accounted for
- News UK was able to continue business as usual on the day following a serious terror attack, despite denial of access to its premises
- Two national newspapers published, on time and in full, from Sungard AS' recovery centre
- Critical deadlines achieved, enabling print and distribution agreements to be honoured
- Commitments to advertisers met, preventing financial loss
- News UK's employees, customers and partners have the reassurance the company's contingency measures will work when called upon

SERVICES

- [Workplace Recovery](#) at Sungard Availability Services' London Recovery Centre.

News UK

ABOUT NEWS UK

[News UK](#) is the proud owner of a stable of news and media brands that span the most popular to the most respected, with titles including The Sun, TLS, The Times and The Sunday Times. Its award-winning stable of titles provides world-class news, sport, analysis and opinion to a diverse audience. News UK also owns pioneering ad tech company Unruly and leading UK and Irish radio company Wireless Group that broadcasts talkSPORT, talkRADIO and Virgin Radio. News UK is part of News Corp — a global media and information services business focused on creating and distributing content that educates, entertains, informs and inspires its customers.

“Before the terror attacks, we'd had experience of handling major incidents and invocations but nothing on this scale. Our preparedness and response was a complete validation of our business continuity strategy.”

Rob Sowerby
Director of Health, Safety and Security
News UK



THE CHALLENGE



TO CONTINUE BUSINESS AS USUAL DESPITE BEING CAUGHT UP IN A TERROR ATTACK

News publishing is an around-the-clock operation and just before 10pm on Saturday 3 June — the night of the London Bridge and Borough Market terror attack — **204 staff were hard at work in The News Building** at 1 London Bridge Street. The first edition of The Sunday Times had been sent to the printers, the first edition of The Sun on Sunday was still about 30 minutes from completion, and other staff were on shift to work on later and online editions, which are updated in real time.

A handful of staff had left the building minutes before the combined vehicle ramming and stabbing attack that killed eight people and injured 48. One journalist was clipped by the side of the terrorists' van and called in the

story to the news desk. Two reporters then left the building to investigate, escorted by the duty Security Supervisor. On their way towards Borough Market, they heard gunshots and immediately made their way back to the newspaper offices. Security, prioritising occupants' safety, immediately took the decision to lock the building down.

It quickly became clear that the News UK team was **in the middle of a terror attack taking place on their doorstep**, with events unfolding rapidly. Rob Sowerby, News UK's Director of Health, Safety & Security, and Jonathon Cormack, Business Resilience Manager activated News UK's incident and crisis management procedures.

THE SOLUTION



WELL-REHEARSED PLANS AND A FULLY-EQUIPPED RECOVERY FACILITY ENABLE PEOPLE TO DO THEIR JOBS

Tannoy messages were broadcast to tell occupants what was going on and staff were prevented from leaving. Members of the security team then visited each floor in person to brief staff.

Their attention then turned to the safety of those employees who had left the offices prior to the attack and may have been in the vicinity, vulnerable to danger. News UK's emergency notification system was used to send targeted welfare messages to the individuals concerned, asking each to confirm their safety. Automated follow-up messages were sent every 15 minutes to those who had not replied. By 1.45am there were only 13 responses outstanding, which were then escalated to the crisis management team and followed up manually. Fortunately, all staff were eventually confirmed safe.

Even before police confirmed that the incident was terror related, it was quickly apparent to Rob Sowerby and Jonathon Cormack that, *"Sunday wasn't going to be a normal day. Thinking ahead, we thought it likely the police cordon would remain in place for some time and we would not be able to come and go from our offices as we pleased."*

Around 1am — half an hour after the police had formally declared the event a terror incident — the pair made the decision to invoke their Workplace Recovery contract with Sungard AS. Sungard AS swung into action to get the recovery centre set-up to News UK's predefined specification, ready to receive journalists, sub-editors and editors; designers and publishing services; and members of the commercial team due to work on Monday editions well before the start of the Sunday morning shift at 6.45am.

THE SOLUTION *(con't)*

However, it transpired that News UK's designated recovery site would be within the police cordon so it could not be used. This was not a problem as Sungard AS' rollback capability — designed for wide area incidents like this — enables customers to recover to the next available facility, which was just over half a mile away and was already factored into News UK's incident management planning.

All Sungard AS' recovery sites have a standardised specification — as it points out, *“All that changes is the view from the window”* - so lack of familiarity with the facility was not a major issue. Jonathon Cormack recalls, *“The Sungard AS team was very helpful and responsive at a time when we were stressed and under pressure.”*



THE BENEFITS



TWO UNABRIDGED DAILY NEWSPAPERS PRODUCED ON TIME FROM THE RECOVERY FACILITY

News UK's recovery was so effective that despite the potential for huge disruption, on Sunday 4 June the company **produced the full Monday editions** of both **The Sun and The Times from the Sungard AS recovery facility.**

Crucially for the newspapers' printing operation, critical timings did not slip so News UK was **able to honour the print and distribution agreements in place** with other publishers and avoid the additional costs incurred by delays.

“The Sungard AS staff, both at our original recovery site and the one we moved to, were beyond helpful as we had equipment that needed to be transferred across,” says Jonathon Cormack *“They called taxis, helped us with loading and did lots of things that weren't necessarily their jobs. They went above and beyond.”*

Rob and Jonathon's effective handling of News UK's response to the atrocity has resulted in *“tremendous buy-in from the Executive to the extent that they have signed off refinements we've made to our plans based on lessons learned even though this means there will be a 20% uplift in costs,”* says Rob Sowerby. *“There's been a realisation that far from being theoretical, our business continuity strategy has been validated and is absolutely critical to the ongoing daily operations of the business.”*

Audit and consulting firm Deloitte reviewed News UK's handling of the incident and invocation. They concluded, *“News UK responded successfully to the incident by following planned and rehearsed processes with the titles producing full editions on schedule and without any indication to the general public that there had been disruption to News UK operations.”*

“There’s been a realisation that far from being theoretical, our business continuity strategy has been validated and is absolutely critical to the ongoing daily operations of the business.”

Rob Sowerby
Director of Health, Safety & Security
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About Sungard Availability Services

Sungard Availability Services provides managed IT services, information availability consulting services, business continuity management software, and disaster recovery services.

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