



CelticMinded

Celticminded.com is one of the largest forums dedicated to Glasgow's Celtic FC.

The website is home to over 2,000 paid-up members, who regularly discuss Celtic's performance (both on and off the pitch) as well as a whole host of off-topic subjects. The forum has over 725K threads, almost 10 million posts and approximately 1270 online users. Traffic quadruples during Away games, where you find fans discussing pitch performance within a few seconds delay of any live match.

CelticMinded.com approached Global Gold back in December 2007 as their team was doing well in the Scottish Premier league, because:

- the website was under performing during Away games and on post-match debates;
- fans of the forum were complaining after receiving endless 'server busy' messages;
- continuous “page refreshing” was making the “server busy” situation worse;
- their previous web host/ISP could only deliver a solution that needed constant maintenance to manage performance during peak times.

In the CelticMinded.com’s own words:

***“We were in a proper muddle when our last hosting contract came to an end. Nobody on the Admin staff at CelticMinded.com is hugely technical and frankly we didn't know what we wanted or needed. I looked at the one of the biggest forums I'm aware of (avforums.com) and asked their Admins who their hosting company was. They put me in touch with GlobalGold and by the time the first contact with them was completed, I knew that we'd found our solution.*”**

Global Gold analysed our needs and talked to us in a language we could understand. Yes, we pay more by a factor of three than we did with our last deal, however, in terms of value, we've gained by a factor of one hundred. We now have a forum whose needs have been serviced with the appropriate kit and the support is flawless. It's rarely been needed and I believe that is because the right solution was put in place at the start.”

CelticMinded needed a robust solution quickly to avoid losing their forum users.

Having hosted and worked on a multitude of forums and with extensive vBulletin experience Global Gold were able to specify, configure and implement a robust single server solution that could handle 1200 simultaneous users starting up to five new threads per second during live match debate.

A primary consideration when coming up with a solution to these issues was the hardware. CelticMinded.com needed a dedicated server which had the capacity to increase as the forum grew by adding further processors, disks and more memory. Global Gold chose the Intel Quad Core processors from HP on a ProLiant DL360 G5, which deploys RAID 1+0 SAS disk array rapidly.

Using experience gained from other vBulletin forums the Global Gold Support team then configured the database engine, MySQL, to perform significantly better under high-load conditions and also implemented two separate caching systems:

- xCache, which caches the compiled code reducing load times for each forum page AND
- Sphinx, which allows large forums to display search results much faster without delaying other forum actions, a serious gripe with large forums.

Last but not least, Global Gold fine-tuned Apache, the web server, to enable it to handle more simultaneous requests and to act to compress every html, CSS and javascript file to reduce load times and subsequently, bandwidth usage.

Global Gold designed, implemented and transferred the live forum with the least disruption to users in just over one week from ordering. It monitors the server 24 x7 and acts as a Technical Administrator within the forum itself.

Final words from Scott @ CelticMinded

“I would heartily recommend anyone to talk to Global Gold about hosting their forum. Their service is friendly, open, honest and efficient, and technically, these guys are clearly superb at what they do.”

May 20th 2009