Imperial PFS Relies on Nutanix for VDI Disaster Recovery

Company Background

Imperial PFS (IPFS) is a leading provider of premium financing to insureds, insurance agents and brokers in the United States and Puerto Rico.

Platform for Disaster Recovery

IPFS was running VMware Horizon View to provide virtual desktops for its 500+ employees and wanted additional servers and storage for a disaster recovery site. The production VDI environment consisted of four Dell R810 servers with flash storage PCIe cards and a DataCore SAN. The system delivered high performance and responsive user desktops, but lacked high availability. In the case of a serious system failure or disaster, all users would be offline and unable to work. So the firm wanted to establish a secondary site for failover and business continuity.

The infrastructure for the DR site did not have to be the same as production – it is virtualized, after all – but it needed to offer comparable performance and the additional benefit of extreme ease of use. VDI is famously demanding of high I/O throughput, so it was important to have a consistent user experience between the production and DR environments. The IT staff also wanted a solution that would be easy to configure and manage. "We wanted the easiest, quickest solution with the least amount of time to deploy," said Jason Walker, Network Engineer at IPFS.

Nutanix – The Easiest System to Use

After evaluating solutions from several vendors, which included testing a trial unit from Nutanix, IPFS chose the Nutanix Virtual Computing Platform because it met all requirements and was by far the simplest solution and easiest to use. The Nutanix converged storage and compute architecture eliminates the need for a SAN and the associated network equipment, connections and configuration.

"The concept of a scale-out cluster with shared storage gives you the best of both worlds," said Walker. "It gives the advantage of expandability without having to have a SAN. It simplifies the server rack. If I want to add another set of desktops, it's no problem because I don't have to go into a SAN and reengineer it. I get everything all at once rather than having to pick and choose from multiple vendors."

> " It gives the advantage of expandability without having to have a SAN... With Nutanix, I get everything all at once rather than having to pick and choose from multiple vendors. "
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> - Jason Walker, Network Engineer, Imperial PFS

Business Needs

High-performance, easy-to-use server and storage infrastructure for a VDI disaster recovery site.
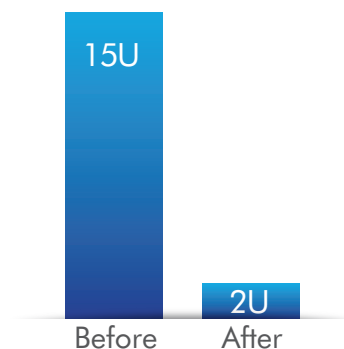
Solution

The Nutanix Virtual Computing Platform

Benefits

- 7.5:1 smaller footprint
- Exceptional performance for responsive virtual desktops
- Converged, SAN-Free architecture offers extreme ease of use
- Acquisition cost less than production servers and SAN
- Lower operating expenses
- Proactive, convenient support

Reduction in Datacenter Footprint

15U Before

2U After

NUTANIX

www.nutanix.com

Nutanix uses exceptionally fast Fusion-io flash PCIe cards, similar to the flash cards installed in the production servers, as well as automated data tiering to deliver high throughput for the IOPS-hungry virtual desktops.

The Nutanix system is far more compact. It delivers the same number of server nodes (four) plus storage in a dense 2U appliance, while the traditional servers and SAN consume 15U, more than 7 times of what the Nutanix converged solution consumes. Walker added, "We didn't have to move anything around to find a place for it. It was easy to slide right in a rack."

On the cost front, the Nutanix system costs less than IPFS's production servers and SAN combined. The financial picture became even more favorable when operational expenditures were factored in. The converged platform meant they did not have to build and integrate another server and SAN system. Ongoing administration for Nutanix is much simpler. "Operationally, we haven't had to touch it," Walker added.

The IT staff set up and tested the Nutanix system at the main corporate datacenter in Kansas City before shipping it to the DR site. Configuration was fast and easy. A Nutanix support engineer provided guidance on best practices, even beyond the scope of Nutanix for the Horizon View application. "We started a clone operation, went to lunch, came back and had 500 desktops," he said.

Nutanix support has been proactive and convenient, according to Walker. For fixes and software updates, an engineer connects to the system remotely and performs the work. "They actively keep everything up to date. If there is a problem with the drives or anything else, they let us know and they handle it. So we don't have to worry about it. We just know it's going to work," he said.

As the number of virtual desktops and VM size continues to grow, the Nutanix system expands easily by adding nodes to the cluster. "If we want more capacity, we can just add another box and be ready to go," said Walker.

> **"** Ongoing administration for Nutanix is much simpler. Operationally, we don't have to touch it much. On top of this, the support team, actively keeps everything up-to-date. So we really don't have to worry about the system. We just know it's going to work. **"**
>
> - Jason Walker, Network Engineer, Imperial PFS

About Imperial PFS

With corporate office in Missouri and New Jersey and branch offices throughout the United States and Puerto Rico, IPFS is a top premium financing company in terms of dollars financed and number of accounts. Premium financing is a short-term loan that spreads payments over the course of a policy instead of paying the full premium upfront. For more information please visit www.ipfs.com

About Nutanix

Nutanix brings forth an exciting new SAN-Free virtualized datacenter platform, converging two tiers of infrastructure down to one. Through the use of innovative server-attached PCIe Flash and high capacity SATA drives, Nutanix' innovative distributed storage and compute cluster localizes the data-path for higher performance and reduced complexity. Inspired by SAN-Free distributed systems employed by Google, Amazon, Facebook, and Twitter, Nutanix is first to market with an enterprise-friendly, easy to deploy storage and compute cluster that dynamically grows to meet business demands. For more information please visit www.nutanix.com.

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