



VM Racks Chooses Nexenta to Bring Financial Sanity for Leading Healthcare Hosting Company

System Configuration: NexentaStor

- NexentaStor with HA Cluster
- Dual Heads connected across three Xyratex JBODs
- 10 Gbps network NFS
- 20 TB of storage



Business overview

Healthcare is one of the world's fastest-growing industries. With new medical technologies and services continuously coming to market, organizations need a hosting provider they can trust in order to provide uncompromising security and performance. Of particular importance is compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). At VM Racks, HIPAA-compliant Web hosting solutions are the specialty of the San Marcos, CA-based company. VM Racks provides enterprise-class virtualization solutions and managed hosting to government, healthcare, and business organizations worldwide. As a certified HIPAA hosting provider, VM Racks' maintains the highest level of audits and certifications including SSAE 16 SOC 1 Type 2, SOC 2 Type 2, and SOC 3 Type 2.

HIPAA compliance is required by all companies in the healthcare industry and for anyone providing services that deal with electronic patient health information (e-PHI) and electronic medical records (EMR). EMRs can include a wide range of sensitive personal, financial, and medical information (medical history, test results personal information, and more) and it is therefore vital for that data to be secured and managed in accordance with HIPAA provisions. VM Racks helps customers maintain HIPAA compliance through

rigorous security protocols and managed hosting solutions as the penalties faced by businesses that do not comply with HIPAA can cost millions of dollars.

Established in 1997, VM Racks takes on the management, security and storage of medical information from healthcare companies. With the release of a \$199 per month HIPAA hosting plan, VM Racks has seen significant growth in their customer base. As the need for HIPAA compliance continues to grow, VM Racks' business has grown as well.

Challenges

With the continuing growth in healthcare data and a promising business outlook, the biggest challenge at VM Racks was the ability to balance scalability, performance, and cost.

"We had gotten by with Openfiler to a point, but when we hit about 5 terabytes of data under management we began to experience problems around speed and scalability," according to Gil Vidals, CEO at VM Racks. "We couldn't even upgrade what we had without encountering problems."

The company found itself on the market for a new storage solution but was turned off by the

pricing and vendor lock-in of the storage industry market leaders. VM Racks needed a solution that would grow as their business grew; one that was flexible enough to scale up or down but while still offering a sophisticated, enterprise-level solution.

“By 2011, we were very bullish on the success of our business, but still lacked the deep pockets to even get the attention of companies like NetApp and EMC,” continued Vidals. “Nexenta allowed VM Racks to have a deep pocket solution without paying deep pocket prices. The so-called ‘market leaders’ had nothing to offer a company of our size.”

Solution

By 2012, VM Racks was ready to roll out NexentaStor, which took place in two stages. The first stage of NexentaStor solved the company’s issues around speed and performance. Stage two involved the installation of the NexentaStor High Availability Cluster (HAC) Plugin.

The HAC plugin provides a storage volume-sharing service. Users make one or more shared volumes highly available by detecting system failures and transferring ownership of shared volumes to the other server in the cluster pair. Because neither system is designated as the primary or secondary system, VM Racks could manage both systems actively for shared storage. It was through the HAC plugin that the company’s scalability issues were resolved, as data can run via a single head while the second head is upgraded.

“We are very pleased with how things turned out, and learned a thing or two along the way,” continued Vidals. “Moving away from vendor-specific hardware meant a lot to us in terms of cost savings, but we found it very important to purchase that commodity hardware from Nexenta’s hardware supported list. We also had some relatively minor issues around configuration that have long since been resolved.”

VM Racks worked with a value added reseller (VAR) to procure the server and disc hardware, purchasing the software directly from Nexenta. Shortly thereafter, VM Rack’s implementation was transitioned to

About Nexenta

Nexenta is the global leader in Software-Defined Storage, delivering easy-to-use, secure and ultra-low cost storage software solutions.

Nexenta solutions are hardware-, protocol-, and application-agnostic, providing innovation freedom and speed for organizations to realize “true” benefits of Software-Defined Infrastructure-centric Cloud Computing. Nexenta enables workloads from rich media-driven Social Living to Mobility; from the Internet of Things to Big Data; from OpenStack and CloudStack to Do-It-Yourself Cloud deployments. Founded around an “open source” platform and industry-disruptive vision.

Southern California-based VAR Aberdeen LLC. Aberdeen became the complete supplier of the commodity hardware and Nexenta’s software as a total integrated solution for the company.

Business Benefits

According to Vidals, the single largest benefit to VM Racks’ installing Nexenta came down to cost.

“Had we gone with one of the market leaders we would have been paying ten times the cost for our storage solution and that cost would have been passed on to our customers. Nexenta allowed us to implement an enterprise-quality solution, but let an entry-level company like us get our foot in the door. I’ve found that bigger storage vendors don’t let growing companies like ours get a toehold the way that Nexenta did. Nexenta didn’t say ‘come back when you are big enough for us.’ Because of the cost savings we’ve realized, we’ve been able to keep our HIPAA pricing the lowest in the industry and that’s something that makes us very proud.”

VM Racks now has more than 200 terabytes under management and is still growing. As the company grows, Nexenta’s solution continues to scale.

“Nexenta took an interest in the success of our business and helped us to grow to where we are today. Their sales, service, and engineering teams have all been a pleasure to work with.” - Gil Vidals, CEO at VM Racks