Vigilant
Case Study

Vigilant Keeps Its Cool – and Improves Its IT System Reliability – with Nexenta Solutions

West Coast, USA
www.vigilant.org
Legal Services

Summary

Challenge: Virtualize physical servers, replace aging server / storage / network hardware. Data retention and cost

Solution: NexentaStor HA Cluster Nordisk NorStor NS2000

Platform: Nordisk, HP, VMware

Use Case: High performance and availability

Benefits:
• More efficient system with less down time
• Comprehensive data security
• Cost savings compared to traditional storage solutions

Business Overview

Vigilant, operating as TOC for half a century, decided to commemorate the start of the next 50 years by formally changing its name to reflect what it always has been: Vigilant.

For more than 50 years, Vigilant has been counselling employers in the Northwest and California. Its staff – employment attorneys, along with safety, HR, and benefits professionals – guide large and small businesses from all sectors through the maze of employment issues, from the everyday to the complex.

Services provided include employee and labor relations, safety concerns, affirmative action plans (AAPs), group health benefits, consulting, and workplace training.

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> *We were feeling the heat, both literally and figuratively, from our legacy storage system. Failures from overheating and age were causing downtime for staff and delays in customer response time. Nexenta was able to solve all these issues, easily and within budget.*
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> Triet Nguyen
> Senior Network Engineer
> Vigilant

Challenges

Vigilant has always relied on technology to advance its business. Ironically, it was all that technology that was crimping the company's ability to grow and serve its customers. Using SharePoint 1.0, deployed on a Windows 2000 server in 2005, and then using WSS 3.0 since 2009, Vigilant realized that it needed a migration path from its older servers that were using aging RAID arrays. Whenever the company added new services (such as Microsoft Dynamics CRM, WSS 3.0, Mitel PBX, and VoIP phones), the system would overheat, leading to potential downtime for appliances and staff.

One option was to undertake major building renovations, including high-end cooling systems. The other option was to consolidate the older, power-eating servers and create a new system with a modern 5U server and storage virtualization stack powered by ESXi and NexentaStor.

By virtualizing the physical servers, Vigilant could reduce server room temperatures, prolonging the server lifecycle and increasing overall reliability of its servers, storage, and networks.

Solution and Benefits

Solution

Nexenta's core storage platform, NexentaStor, is a Software-Defined Storage system based on Linux and a storage-optimized file system based on OpenSolaris/Open Storage ZFS technology. NexentaStor, is able to retrieve data, thereby protecting company interests when servers fail.

To reach a workable solution, Vigilant leaned heavily on Premium Partner Nordisk Systems, Inc., which provided hardware, professional services, and the bundling with NexentaStor. NexentaStor provides a cleaner, greener, more energy-effective solution, all within budget. The solution eliminates redundant backups, reduces business downtime, and ensures critical data always is protected and can be restored in seconds. Snapshot-based replication between databases copies data changes so that data is updated at specified times. Built-in software RAID protects data by storing the same data in different places. Vigilant now easily manages corporate compliance, along with rules of governance for data retention.

NexentaStor delivers high-level efficiencies while providing enterprise-class performance and manageability. It functions both as storage array and a virtualization appliance that abstracts legacy and commodity storage devices, pooling resources and presenting them at the file or block level to virtualization servers. By building a just-in-time infrastructure, with a mix of offerings that are not locked to a single array, Vigilant IT managers can incrementally migrate off of old arrays in a manner that best services its business.

Benefits

NexentaStor delivers superior I/O performance – especially for read-intensive workloads – for this virtualized environment, all at massive savings over traditional storage solutions. Integrated inline (not post-process) deduplication further lowers storage costs by decreasing the total amount of required data storage. Plus, the NexentaStor solution runs faster and cooler while preventing downtime due to appliance fatigue. With NexentaStor's hardware-agnostic solution, Vigilant can leverage a single console to oversee and manage its entire storage infrastructure.