

Nexenta provides capacity and performance to match Rivebit's ambition

Challenge

Implement a storage solution with big data capacity allied with strong performance to support replication across multiple sites.

Benefits

Easy to add capacity without having to shut down. Quick VDI performance with an unlimited number of snapshots, free versioning and high granularity of data protection.

Solution

Rivebit installed NexentaStor on SuperMicro hardware which resulted in a strong technological foundation for Rivebit's storage strategy.

BUSINESS OVERVIEW

After several years as an IT specialist, Roberto Bondavalli decided it was time to use his experience to set up his own business, Rivebit, to provide virtualisation and consolidation, disaster recovery, cloud-based backup and cloud PBX services to SMEs in North Italy.

Having established Rivebit at the start of 2014, Bondavalli was keen to ensure the cloud backup service was up and running quickly as the first step in his ambition to evolve the company into an Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) cloud provider.

CHALLENGES

Rivebit has two data centres, which backup to each other to ensure they are both protected. Each has two VMware ESXi-based servers hosting 50 virtual machines, connected by distributed LAN using Cisco VPLS technology with 100Mb total bandwidth. The company hosts a number of horizontal applications including MySQL, Microsoft Exchange 2013, Sharepoint 2013 and Lync 2013, along with Cisco Call Manager and VMware Horizon View.

To provide an effective cloud backup service, the company required a storage solution that could deliver significant capacity allied with strong performance. "The big challenge was to find a solution with big data capacity and good performance," said Bondavalli. "With traditional storage solutions, this is very hard to find, if not impossible. Sometimes the stability is compromised, especially in infrastructure where storage is replicated across two or more sites."

In his years as a VMware specialist, Bondavalli had never seen storage that managed to successfully combine capacity and performance. He had used storage from large vendors and open source based products but none had delivered on both performance and capacity. Until he found Nexenta.

System Configuration

- SuperMicro SC-847E26 appliance with 10 GB NICs and 24TB capacity
- VMware ESXi-based servers
- Applications including MySQL, Microsoft Exchange 2013, Sharepoint 2013, Cisco Call Manager and Lync 2013
- Two data centre locations

"I worked for some years as a VMware specialist and I had never seen storage with a lot of capacity and good performance until Nexenta"

Roberto Bondavalli, owner, Rivebit

THE NEXENTA SOLUTION

Rivebit opted to install NexentaStor on a SuperMicro SC-847E26 appliance with 10 GB NICs and 24TB capacity (consisting of eight 3TB SAS drives). With 32 available bays, the capacity of the appliance is expandable to nearly 100TB. Installation took a matter of days and the solution was “very fast to deploy and manage”. The appliance was installed onsite by NT Nuove Tecnologie and then Bondavalli deployed it into Rivebit’s infrastructure and the company’s virtual environment himself.

The appliance provides shared storage for the VMware hosts in the company’s two data centres ensuring that data can be rapidly backed up to the backup site and restored from it in the event of a failure. This was an important consideration for Bondavalli who in his earlier career had witnessed an entire infrastructure go down after a firmware update and been forced to restore everything from the backup.

Bondavalli has been very impressed by the solution’s performance and the ability to combine an open solution with enterprise functionality, allied to fast and effective support.

NEXENTASTOR BENEFITS

The ZFS roots of NexentaStor provide a strong technological foundation for Rivebit’s storage strategy. ZFS offers massively scalable storage environments with a virtually unlimited number of snapshots, free versioning and high granularity of data protection.

It is easy to add capacity on the fly without having to shut down and failing or failed drives can be swapped out without any downtime. The system is fast, stable and significantly cheaper than rival products. Exchange and VDI performance is much quicker with Nexenta. It used to take one minute to power up a virtual machine but with Nexenta it takes only 15 seconds.

Storage management is also much easier and takes up far less of his time. Bondavalli used to spend up to four hours a week on storage management issues but now it takes only 30 minutes.

He is also very impressed with the support he has received from Nexenta.

“I think it’s the best support I have ever had,” he said. “I receive the correct answer to what I want to know in minutes.”

Business Impact

NexentaStor provides the capacity, performance, scalability and stability that Rivebit could not find from other vendors.

NexentaStor provides the benefits of an open solution allied to enterprise functionality. It is very well supported and failure recovery times are very fast.

No vendor lock-in so no danger of being forced to follow an expensive and inflexible proprietary upgrade path. Very easy to implement and get up and running.

Nexenta Systems

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