

Simply Mail Solutions

Hosting Services

Challenge

Upgrade storage infrastructure. Performance, cost, and scalability.

Benefits

Quick, easy, and secure customer data access. 90% less time spent on system management. Scalability, with cost controls, due to hardware-agnostic solution.

Solution

NexentaStor™

BUSINESS OVERVIEW

Based in the city of Warrington, in the UK, Simply Mail Solutions is an international email hosting company providing innovative, reliable, and cost-effective email services to customers across the globe.

Although email hosting is its core business, Simply Mail also offers Web and server hosting, enabling companies of any size to eliminate the hardware and administration costs of maintaining in-house solutions.

The company offers a range of email packages from its advanced POP3 solution MSE Basic to more sophisticated packages that include business productivity tools and email access via mobile phones (MS Exchange and Zimbra Collaboration Suite).

SMS also offers add-ons such as advanced anti-spam solutions, email archiving, document sharing, CRM solutions, and, of course, domain registration.

The key to SMS' responsiveness, and its ability to expand services at the highest level, is the high availability and performance of its systems.

CHALLENGES

With the daily increase in its customer base, and a significant influx in the level of email and Web traffic, SMS' previous storage system was showing signs of strain. The cost of replacing or upgrading the system with the original supplier was prohibitive, so another solution was paramount to the company's future growth and success.

SMS required a solution that was agile, reliable, and could handle the ever-increasing IOPS requirements. The solution needed to be scalable, when needed, yet had to have some cost controls as expansion occurred.

Getting locked into one vendor, especially for its hardware, was not the answer. The IT staff requested a solution that could leverage in-house appliances, along with off-the-shelf commodity hardware.

These issues led SMS to research for the best options on the market for replacing its existing storage infrastructure.

System Configuration

- NexentaStor
- 2x OpenStor HA Head Nodes with Deduplication Specification
- 2x OpenStor EX452E6 45 Bay Additional Storage Capacity JBODs
- Fast File I/O Acceleration with:
 - 4x STEC ZeusRAM Write Cache SSDs
 - 4x Read Cache SSDs

"Nexenta's OpenStorage software provides advanced caching and, when it is coupled with SSDs, it offers performance that far outstrips our current requirements, allowing us to stay ahead of our customers' needs whilst still giving us the ability to easily scale up. It also offers enterprise-class redundancy with replication capabilities, including unlimited incremental snapshots and cloning."

Myles Winstone
Marketing Manager
Simply Mail Solutions

SOLUTION OVERVIEW

With help from VA Technologies (based in Bedfordshire), a value added reseller of high performance servers, storage, and workstations, SMS selected a NexentaStor-based SAN.

Having worked with legacy vendors in the past, and realizing the limiting options they provided, SMS, after in-depth research, was more than willing to go the Open Source route. This gave the company the security of knowing that they could grow and expand with commodity hardware from multiple sources. If one supplier disappeared, or if newer less expensive appliances were presented, the company had open options on how to proceed. No more predefined legacy vendor dictums of “Our (very expensive) way or no way”.

SMS saw the benefits of ZFS technology as a solution that fulfilled the company’s current requirements while allowing for multiple expansion avenues.

Presently, the Nexenta SAN provides the storage for all current (and future) mailbox accounts, which is the core business of SMS. The Nexenta solution is dedicated to running MS Exchange Mailboxes, with about 1TB of mailboxes currently stored on the system, and growing quickly.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

An alternative to traditional legacy storage systems from big vendors, Nexenta’s OpenStorage approach helped SMS meet its clients’ needs effectively while remaining competitive in a tough economic climate.

The advance caching, along with the SSD front, allows SMS to achieve the quickest possible access to customer data. The company now can rest easy knowing that it has a fully secure, redundant, two-of-everything back-up system in place.

Providing teamwork and storage industry leadership, Nexenta and VA Technologies have provided SMS with a storage solution that can handle the ever-increasing IOPS requirements while keeping costs low.

Performance is up as a result of SMS management spending far less time on storage issues, allowing key IT personnel to work on other, non-storage related matters.

Data is secure, and accessing it is quick and easy. Customers are very pleased and growth, which is coming fast and on a daily basis, can be handled by a storage solution that can grow as needed, with the best commodity hardware the market has to offer. And with that flexibility, budgeting restrictions have been met while future growth costs can be calculated and controlled.

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