

Atlantis Reduces Storage Costs and Improves Performance of Over 1500 Virtual Desktops



When Bath & North East Somerset Council started to plan its migration to virtual desktops, the high cost of traditional storage capacity threatened to put the entire project in jeopardy.

Bath & North East Somerset Council is a unitary authority delivering public services to a population of over 176,000 people in the west of England. Like all councils in the UK, it is under immense pressure to reduce its operating costs but, at the same time, it wanted to empower its employees to work more efficiently and deliver better services in the community. Construction had recently begun on a brand new office facility, so the council took the opportunity to review its entire IT infrastructure and consider new approaches that would minimize ongoing operating costs, reduce carbon emissions and support mobile working.

Half the Cost of Traditional Storage

Deploying Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) seemed like the ideal strategy, but the council's IT team soon encountered a challenge. When it investigated the storage capacity necessary for its two datacenters and over 30 terabytes of data in a virtualized environment, it found that it would need to make a prohibitively large investment in over 250 new disks for its storage area network (SAN).

IT Solutions Provider, Cetus, were brought on board to lead and advise on the VDI project design work, introducing Atlantis as part of the solution. It instantly became clear that Atlantis HyperDup Content-Aware Data Services could eliminate up to 95% of the council's input/output traffic before it accessed the storage environment. "Our calculations showed that it would be around 50% less expensive to purchase Atlantis software than to adopt a more traditional approach to storage," recalls Imran Iqbal, a solution architect at Bath & North East Somerset Council. "As a software solution, Atlantis also removes the requirement for additional physical storage devices, which saves us money on power and cooling and reduces our carbon emissions."

Bath & North East Somerset Council

Challenges

- Overcome cost barriers to the adoption of VDI
- Minimize ongoing operating costs and carbon emissions
- Help office-based and mobile employees to work more efficiently

Solution

- Atlantis software-defined storage

Benefits

- 50% reduction in projected capital expenditure on storage to support VDI
- Lower operational costs, due to reduced power & cooling requirements for storage
- Improved operational efficiency, with time savings of 1-2 hours per week in the IT department
- Up to 10x faster login times, improving the productivity of office-based and mobile employees



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— IMRAM IQBAL

Solution Architect

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IT Projects Manager
Bath & North East Somerset Council

Virtualized IT Environment

- Citrix XenDesktop, platinum edition 7.1
- VMware vSphere 5.1
- HP ProLiant BL460
- IGEL UD5 thin clients
- Windows Office 2010
- Samsung Galaxy android tablets
- Personal mobile devices

Scalability and High Performance for Users

The VDI strategy was approved, and the council began to deploy virtual desktops, not only at its new administrative headquarters but throughout five other main offices and up to seventy remote sites. The scalable storage optimization capabilities of the Atlantis solution enabled the council to run 1,500 concurrent virtual desktops using its existing attached storage, avoiding the need to purchase and install additional storage.

Deployed in a In-Memory model, the Atlantis software also helps to ensure that users consistently experience faster-than-PC performance, near-instant application launch and super-fast login times. “In the past, it wasn’t uncommon for employees to report that it was taking them as long as ten minutes to log in,” says Leighton Ballard, IT Projects Manager at Bath & North East Somerset Council. “Now everyone can log in in under one minute and that’s due in part to the virtualized storage.”

Time Savings in the IT Department

Compared to a traditional storage environment, the Atlantis software is much easier to manage and maintain on an ongoing basis, helping the IT team to work more efficiently. Iqbal says, “I estimate that we save at least one or two hours a week from simplified storage management.”

“In all honesty we have deployed Atlantis software and forgotten about it,” adds Ballard. “Whirring away in the background, it is definitely one of the least troublesome technologies that we have in our whole virtualized IT environment.”

A Successful VDI Deployment

By removing the cost barrier to VDI, Atlantis has enabled Bath & North East Somerset Council to realize its IT transformation goals. The organization now has a consistent, high performance desktop environment, across all its sites, which enables employees to work productively from any office and from home. VDI also enables employees to work more effectively in the community, using new tablet devices to connect remotely to council systems.

The council has cancelled its five-year PC replacement program and is, instead, replacing 200-300 watt PCs with 7-11 watt thin clients, which are cheaper to purchase and run. Quite justifiably, Ballard says, “We are really proud of what we have achieved here. VDI will help the council operate more cost effectively and deliver more efficient services for citizens.”



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