



Nutanix Takes the Drama Out of a Content Crisis

Top TV and media production company, Endemol Shine UK, deletes challenges of explosive unstructured data growth by migrating to Nutanix Enterprise Cloud

CHALLENGE

As a successful TV and media production company with many award-winning series to its name, you might assume Endemol Shine UK had specialised IT requirements and deep pockets to match. That, however, is far from the case as, media management aside, when it comes to day to day back office workloads, the company's IT needs and budgetary constraints are much the same as those of any other large organisation. More than that, it faces similar challenges around digital transformation, business agility and scalability, not least the need to cater for rapidly escalating and hard to predict unstructured data growth.

"Our legacy blade servers and fibre channel SAN storage platforms were designed to support applications with modest and very predictable block storage requirements," explains Daniel Davis, Infrastructure Manager at Endemol Shine UK. "Sizing those platforms to cope with modern digital applications and dealing with associated unstructured data demands was becoming a real problem, especially with workloads liable to change at short notice. As well as limiting our agility it was all getting far too complicated and difficult to manage."

The need to remotely manage an infrastructure distributed across multiple sites was another ongoing concern. So too were escalating licensing costs as Davis and his team had deployed VMware in the past to leverage the flexibility and resiliency of virtualization.

SOLUTION

With its legacy 3-tier platforms reaching end of life, the company decided to look at a number of alternatives including a switch to the public cloud in the form of Microsoft Azure. That, however, proved too costly so the decision was taken to migrate to a more scalable on-premise solution, evaluating hyper-converged products from HP Enterprise and SimpliVity before, eventually, choosing the Nutanix Enterprise Cloud.

Easy and proven linear scalability was one factor in that decision, but Davis and his team were equally influenced by the management capabilities of the single Nutanix Prism interface and its ability to simplify administering infrastructure across multiple sites.

The Nutanix platform also came out on top thanks to its ability to run multiple hypervisors and the integrated hypervisor, AHV, included licence-free as part of the Nutanix Enterprise Cloud OS solution, as Davis explains.

"We wanted to get away from VMware and its associated licencing costs and initially thought Microsoft Hyper-V was the way to go," he commented. "However, the management overhead was far too high and support was an issue. We then saw for ourselves what AHV could do and that we could manage it from the same console as the rest of the platform and it became a no-brainer – AHV it was."

"We no longer have to plan ahead to deal with growth in unstructured data or the rollout of new applications," said Davis. "We can size workloads on the fly with the Nutanix Enterprise Cloud and quickly add resources to meet the needs of a production as they ramp up – just as with AWS or Azure but at a much lower cost and on our own terms."

– Daniel Davis, Infrastructure Manager, Endemol Shine UK

The entire pre-production IT infrastructure employed by Endemol Shine UK was replaced using the Nutanix Enterprise Cloud, including equipment in both the company's principal office and shared racks in a co-location datacentre plus a number of remote sites.

Lastly, to reduce resource requirements, Davis and his team decided against providing for disaster recovery by replicating to a remote cluster, instead using the integrated snapshot tools provided as part of the Nutanix platform to store backups to Microsoft Azure.

RESULTS

With the help of Nutanix Professional Services the entire deployment and migration project was completed in just a few weeks with immediate benefits, starting with a reduction in the co-location data centre footprint down 33%, from three racks to just one, with associated savings in power and cooling.

Performance has also been enhanced, but by far the biggest benefits are increased ability to rapidly adapt to the changing demands of the business and much simplified management.

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The switch to AHV has, similarly, proved very successful with the company also opting to upgrade to the latest Windows Server release as part of the migration. The 60+ VMs involved host the company's core finance and asset management applications, Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops, and back office services such as domain controllers, and file and print servers, plus its recently deployed Avaya IP Office system. Upgrading all these to the new Windows Server release had previously been expected to take a month using the legacy infrastructure, but thanks to AHV it was all done in just five days.

"We're really happy with the Nutanix hypervisor," Davis told us, "which has no problems handling any of our applications and is really easy to manage. We're also very impressed by the level of support that Nutanix provides for AHV and, in fact, the whole of the Enterprise Cloud solution. We haven't had many problems but the issues we have come across have mostly been resolved on first contact which is something we've never experienced with other vendors and a real selling point as far as Nutanix is concerned."

NEXT STEPS

Following the initial installation and migration project, Endemol Shine UK has equipped a further remote site with a Nutanix cluster and is busy completing the rollout of Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops there. Beyond that, staff previously fully occupied in sizing the former infrastructure to cope with growing demand are now free to step back and consider how best to take advantage of the Nutanix platform moving forward.



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Company

Endemol Shine UK is a highly successful media production company working across a range of platforms from TV and video to social media, online gaming and mobile apps. Producing more than 2000 hours of content a year including award-winning drama, genre defining factual programmes and innovative digital content the group comprises a diverse mix of labels, television businesses, content producers and talent agencies.

Industry

Entertainment

Business Need

Enable a more agile business and be better equipped to cope with the demands of modern digital applications and unstructured data growth by replacing legacy IT infrastructure

Solution

- › Nutanix Enterprise Cloud
- › AHV hypervisor
- › Snapshots for Data Protection and Disaster Recovery (DR) in Microsoft Azure
- › Proprietary core finance and asset management applications
- › Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops
- › Avaya IP Office

Benefits

- › Effortlessly adjust to rapid unstructured data growth with linear scaling
- › Reduced hypervisor infrastructure cost and complexity
- › Simplify management and free resources to focus on innovation with single pane of management for all physical and virtual resources across multiple sites
- › 33% reduction in rack footprint with associated power and cooling savings
- › Increased performance at a lower cost

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