



WINTHROP UNIVERSITY OVERCOMES TRADITIONAL STORAGE OBSTACLES WITH GRIDSTORE

Customer Overview

Winthrop University is a nationally accredited university that offers undergraduate, graduate and continuing professional education programs of national caliber while also focusing on student development and engagement. Founded in 1886, the university today is attended by 6,170 students. The school has been selected by U.S. News & World Report as one of America's Best Colleges for the past 21 years. All eligible degree programs are nationally accredited, a reflection of the university's commitment to be among the very best institutions in the nation.

Challenge: DAS, NAS and SAN Limitations Prevented Scalability and the Flexibility Needed for Future Growth

Winthrop University has a centralized IT infrastructure that revolves around supporting its mission-critical ERP system, which is used for everything from meal planning and student ID cards to housing programs and academic computing labs. As the technologically advanced university continued its growth, storage became a focal issue.

The university manages a centralized storage infrastructure which covers over 100 Windows and Linux servers. Using a mix of DAS, NAS and SAN storage, the college was quickly finding that storage limitations were impacting application performance, reliability and even worse, flexibility for future expansion. Its DAS solutions were inflexible, NAS solutions became inefficient to scale with islands of storage to manage, and SAN solutions costs were skyrocketing.

"We found that our existing storage infrastructure was becoming non-scalable and very limiting," said James Hammond, associate vice president for information technology at Winthrop University. "Our DAS environment was extremely inflexible and our various NAS islands were proliferating, making it difficult to manage and expensive to scale. We thought SANs would be the silver bullet that could solve our challenge, but the price tag was very painful. We were also very frustrated because the return on investment for the SAN was out of sight due to the high cost of storage and management complexity. We knew there had to be a better solution for the long term."

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UNIVERSITY



SOLUTION HIGHLIGHTS

- Proven Hyper-V support
- Direct plug-in to the Microsoft Management Console
- Simple to use, enterprise-class storage features
- Terabytes upon terabytes of capacity

Solution: Gridstore Delivered Better Scalability, Flexibility and Affordability than Any Other Storage Option

Winthrop University was certain that there had to be a solution that could deliver enterprise-class storage functionality with the scalability, performance and price flexibility they needed. After researching their options, the college discovered Gridstore.

“Once we began to look for new storage solutions to upgrade our SAN and NAS environment, we heard about Gridstore,” said Hammond. “We called Gridstore and scheduled a product demonstration. Based on what we saw and the price point to get started, we opted to skip test driving demo units within our environment and placed an order right on the spot. At a third of the price we paid for our SAN solution, the Grid offered a value proposition we couldn’t pass up. With great scalability, superior cost control and automatic optimization for our applications, there was no need to over-provision our storage as we had to before.”

The Grid uses patented Server-side Virtual Controller™ (SVC) technology to deliver automatically optimized performance for all applications across both virtual and physical servers. By combining simple building blocks of storage with intelligent vControllers, the Grid grows more powerful as more storage nodes and vControllers are added, allowing Winthrop to independently scale capacity, I/O and processing, at a fraction of the cost of traditional storage offerings.

Results: Storage Simplicity without Compromising Features or Performance

Winthrop University deployed the Grid to support its disk-to-disk backup processes. Since the school had reached the limits of its DAS storage, it needed a quick, cost-effective solution to upgrade storage in support of its data protection strategy.

“Gridstore has freed us from the scale and performance constraints of our existing DAS and NAS infrastructure while giving us enterprise-class performance and scalability that is as robust as a SAN. It is the ideal solution for Winthrop.”

Based on its positive experience with the Grid in its back up infrastructure, the university will leverage Gridstore to optimize its Hyper-V environment, with a goal to achieve 100% data redundancy for its virtual infrastructure in an off-site datacenter. Winthrop has selected the Grid to help it achieve this goal with a storage solution that grows more powerful as it scales while eliminating I/O performance bottlenecks, coupled with the value of a “Pay-as-you-Scale” flexible pricing model to achieve both cost and performance efficiency.

“We are already seeing Gridstore deliver a superior storage solution for more than one third the cost compared to our SAN, maybe even better,” said Hammond. “It has both fit my economic needs and future growth plans as we move to a virtual Hyper-V environment. Gridstore is an ideal storage solution for our IT infrastructure, both today and tomorrow.”

James Hammond, Associate Vice President for Information Technology, Winthrop University

RESULTS HIGHLIGHTS

Delivered enterprise-class features for 1/3 the cost of a SAN

Lowered management requirements

Enables 100% datacenter redundancy

Achieved cost-effective storage scalability

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