



Gridstore Performs as Promised According to Intraworks I.T. Management

Performance and Recovery Key Benefits Realized



Customer Overview

Intraworks I.T. Management specializes in assisting small and medium sized businesses with information technology on Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland. Intraworks' range of services include computer networks and security solutions, along with web and email hosting, secured offsite backup and managed data services.

Intraworks also provides a variety of innovative hardware solutions from industry leading manufacturers including its own line of Proximity servers and workstations.

Challenge: Providing a wide array of hosting services meant downtime was not an option, even for a storage upgrade and regular forklift upgrades unacceptable

Intraworks delivers a technological lifeline to its customer base, the SMBs on Vancouver Island and other regional businesses in the Lower Mainland. As the largest IT solutions provider north of Victoria, British Columbia, their clients have access to a 5,000 square foot data center which is fully secured, environmentally controlled and power redundant, with 100 MBPS fiber and Internet access. Intraworks prides itself on reliable IT offerings and service without disruption.

Intraworks constantly monitors the environment to ensure the ability to meet their customers' needs. The organization was in search of a highly reliable, fault-tolerant storage solution that would also meet performance requirements for their critical applications and cloud services. With a steadily growing client base, ease of scalability was of utmost importance to Intraworks. And as always, there were budget considerations.

"We had been hunting around for some time looking for new storage technology to meet our data center requirements. We looked at expensive and complex-to-configure options, including solutions from NetApp, EMC and Datacore, which was our previous storage system. All of these options were complicated, limited in their ability to grow with a data center's needs and prohibitively expensive," said Phil Stiller, president of Intraworks. "Then we found Gridstore and decided to test run its offerings."

After evaluating Intraworks' needs, Gridstore provided the company with a storage solution to connect to a Windows Server 2012 R2 SMB 3.0 cluster. The SMB 3.0 cluster provides file-based storage access to several Hyper-V clustered servers. Gridstore allows Intraworks to manage a common storage pool for all of the company's virtual machines—providing easy-to-manage, fully redundant storage to Intraworks' production servers, so customers' systems are up and running all day, every day.



Solution Highlights

- Windows Server 2012 R2 SMB 3.0 Cluster
- Gridstore 3 with six Capacity Nodes
- Average of five VMs per server
- System Center 2012

Intraworks deployed a Gridstore 3 system of six nodes to provide for both current needs and anticipated near-term growth. Intraworks found that Gridstore was a solution that is very flexible in its configuration, scales incrementally as the business grows and requires no downtime. “For us,” said Stiller, “the greatest savings we realized when moving to Gridstore came in manpower. Gridstore provided us with the ability to deploy additional storage, quickly and simply, without interruption to production. For Intraworks and our customers, the prospect of no disruption with ease of deployment is huge.”

Solution: Gridstore—the ultimate in plug and play

Once installed at Intraworks, Gridstore was put through its paces. “Getting into new technology is stressful. We had to know what the Gridstore units were like in real life, so we gave them a workout—unplugged them, rebooted, moved VMs around—and the system never failed. They performed exactly as Gridstore said they would.”

Intraworks noted that with Gridstore in place it can now run its System Center 2012 and any virtual machines on any server and be assured to get the performance reliability it needs. As their business and therefore storage needs grow, the incremental scalability of Gridstore allows them to continually meet their capacity needs with costs that align to their business.

“The units were incredibly easy to implement. Redundant storage usually requires several days to get the software functioning on track. With Gridstore, the solution was up and running the same day. It was very impressive.”

Intraworks I.T. Management realized several benefits in implementing Gridstore:

- Intraworks' Gridstore installation goes beyond the ability of RAID-5 and RAID-6 that handle disk failures. Gridstore handles failures of entire storage nodes, network connections as well as disks, and other components. On a node failure it is fault tolerant and continues to run with no disruption or data loss—a key concern for Intraworks.
- Intraworks now has a common storage pool for its virtual machines. Performance and availability to its production servers is stable and dependable.
- As Intraworks' storage needs increase Gridstore will scale as well, providing increased capacity and performance as each additional node is added.
- Gridstore provided optimal results, even though its acquisition price point was significantly lower than other solutions.
- With Gridstore's software-defined storage solutions, Intraworks possesses a virtualization offering that is easy to manage and enables simple scaling while reducing I/O bottlenecks.

“There's nothing like Gridstore out of the box,” said Stiller. “It works exactly as the Gridstore team said it would and gave us the performance, scalability, and resiliency we needed.”

Results Highlights

- Up and running in a day; savings on cost and ongoing management
- Common storage pool for all of Intraworks' virtual machines
- Provides the performance and reliability needed in a virtual infrastructure
- Highly resilient even under stress of losing power or a disk or entire node failure
- Scales as the company's needs grow

Certification

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