

Japan Elderly Welfare Foundation

Case Study

“Safe and Better Senior Life,”
Nexenta SDS supports the mission critical
virtual infrastructure for leading health
welfare foundation

Tokyo, Japan

www.yuyunosato.or.jp

Virtualized Infrastructure, Disaster Recovery, Backup & File Systems



Summary

Challenge: Limited number of employees, no downtime

Solution: NexentaStor

Platform: Dell

Use Case: Virtualized Infrastructure, Disaster Recovery,
Backup & File Systems

Benefits:

- Real-time electronic medical records can now be collected 24/7
- Minimal IT administrators are able to manage storage solution at a low cost with Open Source-based software and enterprise level support
- Easy installation & no support issues

Business Overview

“Yuu Yuu Village” was founded as service facilities aimed for bettering senior life.

Japan Elderly Welfare Foundation was established in 1973 by the permission of the Japanese Minister of Health, Labor and Welfare. It is one of the oldest paid nursing home facilities, and was approved as a general incorporated foundation by the government in 2013. Seven locations/facilities known as “Yuu Yuu Village” run across Japan, such as the Hamamatsu facility (established in 1976 as the first facility), Izu Kohgen, Kobe, Yugawara, Osaka, Sakura, and Kyoko.

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Mr. Atsunori Tsuyuki
IT Administrator

Challenges

There are two people working within the Information Technology Department at the Foundation and Mr. Atsunori Tsuyuki is one of them. The importance of IT Administration work is increasing every year despite the limited employees in the field. For example, IT Admins manage client terminals such as the newly introduced Tablet system, while they also manage the current backend infrastructures. All of the Foundations paperwork is transferred into electronic medical records and many of these records are now saved as videos and images.

“We cannot have any downtime of our system. Our quality of service relies on making sure our system runs 365 days a year, 24 hours a day in order to precisely record all of our residents’ information,” said Atsunori Tsuyuki, IT Administrator at the Japan Elderly Welfare Foundation.

In 2012, the IT infrastructure was updated due to the requirements of the field. There are a limited number of employees to manage the IT system, so they deployed virtual servers. After the virtual servers were implemented, the Japan Elderly Welfare Foundation then decided to consider a new storage system for the new infrastructure.

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Solution and Benefits

Solution

Fast and Efficient Storage System Deployment

When the Foundation started their virtual servers, they had used local hard disks, however, using this approach caused problems with maintenance. The support to get the system running as well as HA clustering between virtual servers was very difficult and expensive. Therefore, they decided they needed a shared storage solution to run the entire system.

“We had an on premise legacy storage system as a simple file server for data collection before we deployed the virtual server infrastructure. Many times we considered replacing this legacy system, but we never succeeded. It is very hard to determine such items as, how much capacity we actually needed for each folder/directory, etc.,” said Tsuyuki.

The Foundation also researched alternative storage virtualization products, but none of the solutions met their requirements. Although not an option in the beginning of their search, they then started to look for Open Source-based products for the new storage solution. During their search, interview articles of Tarkan Maner, Nexenta Chairman & CEO caught Mr. Atsunori Tsuyuki interests. He was interested in Nexenta’s Software-Defined Storage (SDS) concept and ideas, and attended a Nexenta seminar held at a local leading technology distributor, Ascentech’s VDI Innovation Center in the summer of 2015.

The Foundation then learned more about Nexenta SDS and its benefits. Nexenta’s solutions are Open Source-based software, but with enterprise level support provided by Nexenta. They were looking for a storage solution to use within a virtual infrastructure, but learned Nexenta SDS can also be used for any workload, such as backup and file storage through Nexenta’s highly valued unified storage features. Thin Provisioning and Inline Deduplication are great for effective capacity usage. Moreover, the price of the Nexenta storage solution is much less expensive than all other storage products.

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NexentaStor is Nexenta’s file and block unified storage solution and its license model is very simple and comprehensive volume calculation, compared to other storage solutions with complicated option licenses and annual fees. The Foundation knew they did not have to worry about the cost increasing after they purchased the products. They also easily captured the hardware cost since they can use standard x86 hardware. Unlike legacy appliance storage pricing, Nexenta has a very clear pricing structure. The discussion with Nexenta went well and the overall decision to move forward with the project was in October 2015.

Benefits

There is no performance issue

It was very important to the Foundation that the solution was an Open Source-based product, but with enterprise level support. “We are running our system with very few employees. With this limited number of employees, the product knowledge tends to rely one person, so we needed the vendors’ product support as well. We compared other Open Source-based products, and NexentaStor satisfied our need for enterprise support with reasonable pricing and licensing model,” continued Tsuyuki.

The Foundation found that NexentaStor’s performance is equal or better than the local hard disks, which they formerly used with the virtual servers. NexentaStor effectively uses SSD and large DRAM as caching mechanism.

“We were honestly worried about the performance before deploying NexentaStor because our virtual servers need to connect to the storage via network, but there was no issue on the performance at all. We simply manage the storage for multiple virtual servers, so it dramatically reduces the maintenance workload. We are also seeing benefits by using NexentaStor snapshots to secure the virtual servers’ image when the operating system upgrades. We are feeling that the maintenance cost is decreasing greatly and we were very pleased by the simple deployment,” said Tsuyuki.

They introduced NexentaStor’s remote replication for their Disaster Recovery (DR) between East Japan and West Japan. This was great improvement for Japan Elderly Foundation’s infrastructure. It was a great benefit for the Foundation to have data in two distanced locations in case of any natural disasters. They accomplished this solid enterprise class DR environment with very low cost with Nexenta SDS.

They are improving their backup system as well by using Nexenta SDS. NexentaStor backup takes only a few minutes on the new system, while the former backup took much longer and required someone to monitor closely. The field engineers also feel the benefits of the Nexenta SDS solution.

NexentaStor also bundles the Web UI management tool, so there is no need to purchase an extra management tool. Administrators can manage everything through the NexentaStor Web UI. It is very easy to use, so they can easily switch/edit CIFS and NFS settings.

“Administrators feel the ease of the management with this storage solution compared with the former system. Hardware issues are captured by Dell idrac (IPMI). We already have many x86 servers and manage them in the same way, so we have no issue to manage the IPMI hardware alert tools. Actually, only one person checks this alert and we are very pleased that we don’t have to have a new hardware alerts systems like other legacy appliance storage solutions require. We had no confidence on the sizing of the shared storage, so we had to have a virtual server images area, shared files area, etc. We do not have to worry about this at all with NexentaStor because we only check the upper limit on one big pool on NexentaStor. All shared areas are thin provisioned by default,” said Tsuyuki.

The Foundation hasn’t had any issues after deploying NexentaStor and Mr. Atsunori Tsuyuki is looking forward to the future with Nexenta Systems.

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Toll free: 1-855-639-3682
sales@nexenta.com
nexenta.com

twitter.com/nexenta
facebook.com/nexenta
LinkedIn: Nexenta Systems Inc

Nexenta Systems, Inc.
451 El Camino Real, Suite 201
Santa Clara, CA 95050

