

The **Real Estate Council of Ontario** gains peace of mind with a flexible, reliable cloud ready storage infrastructure

Real Estate Council of Ontario



Overview

The Real Estate Council of Ontario (RECO) is responsible for regulating real estate in Ontario and enforces the standards required to obtain and maintain registration as a broker. It also addresses inquiries, concerns and complaints about the conduct of registrants and takes action to protect consumers and is responsible for administering education and insurance requirements for real estate professionals.

Solution

RECO IT Manager Mike Prime engaged Softchoice's consultative team to assist him in reviewing options for the organization's growing storage management challenges. After an in-depth evaluation, the Softchoice team recommended an EMC VNX solution with Remote Protection Suite.

Softchoice system consultants worked closely with the RECO team to implement a fully redundant SAN environment and provided extensive knowledge transfer to ensure RECO staff was able to support and manage the solution themselves.

Results

RECO has reduced operational costs, improved performance and enabled much improved business continuity resources associated with all mission critical web and core application services.

Increasing Storage Needs Drive Change

Mike Prime, Manager of Information Systems, having recently joined RECO, discovered that the organization was rapidly running out of storage space and that its existing storage technology was aging and approaching end of life.

As a regulatory body, RECO is responsible for storage and quick retrieval of a wide range of legal documents and multiple web services designed to meet the needs of its registrants and the public. It has an extensive repository housing consumer information, supports customer inquiry workflows and allows buyers and sellers to check the history and registration status of their real estate agents. In addition, the IT infrastructure serves as the foundation for web services during peak seasonal periods where the volume of transactions is high and mission critical to operations. Peak load periods are as a result of the renewal of real estate agents insurance and the registration process for continuing education courses for agents required by legislation.

As a new manager, Mr. Prime carefully reviewed storage issues with key IT staff and determined that it was rapidly becoming inadequate to manage existing requirements, based on growth as well as the needs for higher agility in the environment. His team knew that increasing data growth was imminent as new services for real estate professionals were coming online shortly. In addition, it was discovered that disaster recovery technologies were out of date. When recovery was required, it was taking much too long.

With increasing pressures to provide “always on” reliable service and manage increasing data growth, Mr. Prime and his team had a dilemma on their hands. They could “band-aid” a solution, by renewing the existing storage technology and adding more servers or they could go in a new direction and recommend a completely new approach to achieve cloud-like agility in the environment.

A key decision factor was the concern that a “band-aid” solution might not be adequate should a disaster occur and could prove catastrophic if recovery took weeks instead of hours. Poor information recovery could result in damage to the organizations reputation and credibility and delays or problems accessing information or insurance renewals could impact real estate agents ability to conduct their businesses.

“Softchoice provided a ‘one-stop shop’ for us. We needed a quick solution and the partnership with Softchoice and EMC meant we could meet our very aggressive deadlines and implement a solution in record time. It has been an excellent collaboration resulting in very good results.”

- Mike Prime, Manager of Information Systems RECO

Knowledge Transfer a Key Deliverable

One of the main goals of the project was not only to implement two EMC VNX and RecoverPoint, but to ensure that Softchoice system consultants working on the project delivered knowledge transfer so that RECO’s technical resources could be self-sufficient after the engagement.

Working intensively with RECO, the Softchoice team implemented a fully redundant SAN environment allowing complete failover to a Disaster Recovery site, if the primary location failed.

Since implementing VNX unified storage, RECO has reduced operational costs, improved performance and enabled much improved business continuity resources associated with all mission critical web and core application services. A key highlight of the solution is its ability to meet new recovery objectives bringing the time line of recovery from days or potentially weeks to mere hours.

Softchoice Partnership

Working with Softchoice Account Manager Chris Gowans, Mr. Prime was introduced to the Softchoice architecture team who provided a consultative evaluation of the environment. They proposed a solution based on EMC VNX unified storage with Remote Protection Suite, an innovative virtual storage technology. Two arrays at separate sites with EMC's "DVR-like" RecoverPoint software for array based replication addressed the recovery time objectives associated with the business needs and provided ease of expansion to scale as new services and load were required.

As an innovative manager, Mr. Prime's long-term strategy was to build an infrastructure to be private cloud-ready to accommodate the organization's needs as it grew. He realized his best option was to transition to the new EMC infrastructure to support the organization's existing needs and position RECO for future growth and development.

Business Benefits

"The VNX solution recommended by Softchoice allows me to sleep at night," says Mr. Prime. "Knowing that our resources are continually up and available and able to manage data growth as well as having reliable disaster recovery is a huge relief."

With a small IT team, Mr. Prime needed a "lean" approach to managing the storage infrastructure. The Softchoice recommendation to implement the EMC VNX solution ensures that RECO operates at the highest level of efficiency and reliability, and positions the organization for future private cloud readiness.

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