



Nimble Storage keeps Grant Street Group ahead of the curve

GSG replaces traditional and flash-only arrays to cost-effectively improve performance

Objective

Grant Street Group needed more storage capacity and better performance for SaaS applications

Approach

Evaluated solutions from NetApp, EMC, SolidFire and other all-flash products

IT Matters

- Obtained higher performance at a lower cost than flash-only systems
- Gained the ability to proactively manage the storage environment

Business Matters

- Advance warning of latency issues through InfoSight allows for better budgeting
- Uses just half the data center footprint and one quarter of the power of the Dell systems



Challenge

More capacity and better SaaS app performance

Grant Street Group (GSG) develops, hosts and administers customized software applications for government entities and financial institutions. Using the software-as-a-service (SaaS) model, GSG provides its clients with access to the latest technologies from any location with Internet access — saving them time, money and staff resources. GSG now provides a wide variety of innovative solutions and services to its clients, including support for financial transactions related to revenue collection, auctions of fixed income and legal instruments, and e-payments.

Grant Street Group had been relying on Dell EqualLogic and Hewlett Packard Enterprise MSA arrays supporting a wide mix of workloads, ranging from large-capacity/slow-performance applications, to extremely low latency/high-IO applications.

“We originally put in an EqualLogic SSD array since it was a compromise from a cost and performance standpoint,” notes David Hewett, director of Information Systems at Grant Street Group. “But the Dell system didn’t give us the capacity or performance we needed, and it lacked in redundancy.”

Grant Street Group also had an all-flash array from one of the flash storage vendors. “The all-flash system provided the high performance we were looking for, but it was lacking in reliability and very expensive,” Hewett reports. “Plus, we were not happy with the level of support we were receiving from that vendor.”

Hewett and his team decided to investigate the options for upgrading the aging storage environment. “As we looked for a new storage platform, we focused on the initial purchase price, ongoing support and expansion costs, and the ability to reduce data center footprint and power,” notes Hewett. “We also needed a solution that would work well in our VMware® vSphere environment.”

Customer at a glance

HPE solution

- Nimble Storage Adaptive Flash Arrays
- Nimble Storage InfoSight

Hewett and his team evaluated a number of different storage solutions, including arrays from NetApp and EMC, but both platforms would have required a significant expansion in data center space to obtain enough capacity and performance. “A traditional array with lots of spinning disks was not a practical solution for us,” notes Hewett. “We also looked at SolidFire, EMC XtremIO, and a few other all-flash products, but the TCO was too high when calculated over five years.”

Solution

Nimble Storage, exactly what is needed

After evaluating the alternatives, Grant Street Group made the decision to purchase a Nimble Storage Adaptive Flash array for the company’s main data center. Highly satisfied with the performance from the initial unit, they bought three Nimble Adaptive Flash arrays.

When Nimble Storage (a Hewlett Packard Enterprise company) announced the new Nimble Adaptive Flash Array, Hewett’s response was, “That’s exactly what we need! The Nimble array with the All Flash Shelf provides the performance we need at a much better price point than the all-flash alternatives. Plus, the Nimble Adaptive Flash Array fits in just half the data center footprint and consumes only one quarter of the power of the other systems we reviewed.”

Benefit

Faster deployments and easier upgrades

“The Nimble arrays are very easy to deploy,” according to Hewett. “It actually took longer to unbox the arrays than it did to get them up and running on the network. We didn’t have to fight with the arrays, they just worked. It’s also very easy to upgrade the Nimble systems. We swapped out the existing SSDs in our first two arrays with higher density SSDs and it took just a few minutes with no interruption to service.

“Nimble InfoSight is a very useful management portal,” Hewett continues. “With all of the different statistics on our arrays, I can easily move virtual machines around to keep us in a nice spot from a latency perspective. Although we haven’t experienced any performance issues with Nimble Storage, InfoSight is telling us that we are pushing the edge on our arrays. We are still getting very good latency numbers, so we’ll address the expansion later this year. But it’s nice to have the advance warning so we can be prepared from a budgeting perspective.”

GSG is now starting to consolidate its IT environment to ease management overheads. “Nimble is a very good platform to consolidate to,” Hewett concludes. “We’ve had upgrade and support issues with our previous storage arrays, but we don’t have any reservations at all with Nimble. No matter what we throw at Nimble, it handles it extremely well. I don’t stand behind products unless I really believe in them, but I’ll pitch Nimble to anyone who will listen. From everything I have ever learned about storage, Nimble shouldn’t be able to deliver 125,000 write IOPS from their Adaptive Flash Arrays. I don’t know how Nimble does it, but it works like a dream.”

Learn more at
hpe.com/storage/nimble



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