



Customer Success Story

"File virtualization is a key component in our global file services strategy. It has made us much more efficient, which allows us to deliver better support to our users."

—Global Technology Infrastructure Manager

Highlights

Industry

- Financial Services

Challenges

- File server environment expanding rapidly to cope with 30% annual storage growth rate
- Time-consuming data migration processes required downtime of up to 12 hours
- Static mapping between clients and storage resources required constant user configuration changes when storage was provisioned

Solution

- Clustered F5 Acopia ARX6000 devices
- F5 Acopia migration and tiered storage policies

Benefits

- Easily completed major migration from Windows servers to NAS without downtime
- Able to provision storage or move files at will, without impacting user or application access to data
- Better utilization of storage resources, dramatically streamlined management burden, and reduced costs

File Virtualization Yields Big Gains in Efficiency for Major Financial Firm

As one of the world's most recognizable financial institutions, this firm serves individuals, businesses, and organizations from offices in countries around the globe. It provides a full suite of products and services, including wealth management, investment banking, insurance, and a wide range of other services.

Challenges

Gaining control of an expanding file server environment and improving data migration processes

Storage growth rates of 30 percent annually had made it increasingly difficult for the company's IT organization to efficiently manage the more than 700 terabytes (TB) of data stored in its Microsoft Windows environment.

Like many companies, this firm has had problems handling the rapid increase in .PST (email archive) files for several years. But the latest capacity crunch had a different cause, according to the company's global technology infrastructure (GTI) manager.

"Applications are more robust, and users are becoming more sophisticated with the applications they use. They are adding graphics to spreadsheets, using multimedia in PowerPoint presentations, and it just consumes disk space," the GTI manager said.

To handle the constant demand for additional capacity, the company regularly added more file servers, but the direct mapping between approximately 50,000 users and the physical file locations only intensified the management difficulties.

"There are lots of challenges in managing a Windows environment," the GTI manager noted. "We wanted to control the growth of our file server environment and the number of vendors in that environment, but we needed to break the one-to-one, person-to-file server linkage. By doing that, we knew we could deliver a better level of service to our users."

Solution

Intelligent file virtualization with F5 Acopia ARX devices

File virtualization offered this financial services company the flexibility it required. By deploying F5® Acopia® ARX™ devices, the company was able to eliminate the static mapping from client to storage resources, giving IT the ability to easily move data in response to changes in the infrastructure.

In the past, when a server ran out of space, administrators had to first determine if there were files that could be deleted. If they had to move data over to the new file server, they were forced to re-map affected clients to the new location. It was a time-consuming and inefficient process that was repeated over and over again.

"Now, with F5 Acopia, we can map storage to a larger file server or make whatever changes we need to make on the backend, and we never need to go back and change the user information," the GTI manager said. "That's a huge savings for us."

This new data mobility has enabled the financial services firm to dramatically improve its data migration procedures, which was especially important when the company initiated a plan to consolidate Windows servers to a new network-attached storage (NAS) environment.



"Before F5 Acopia, migration was a multi-step process for us," he explained. "We had to take the files offline and copy everything to the new directory, change the user profiles, remap, and then check that everything was okay. It could take anywhere from one to 12 hours, and we'd really rather not take users offline if we don't have to."

Now, the company employs a seamless migration methodology that enables IT to move files when the users are still accessing them, so downtime is never an issue.

The company has taken advantage of file virtualization technology to implement a tiering strategy as well. It has started moving files from tier 1 to an archive platform based on file age, but is studying different information lifecycle management (ILM) policies to determine which of those will enable it to shift 80 percent of its files to the archival tier.

Results

Streamlined management and support, plus measurable cost reductions

By implementing the F5 Acopia solution, the financial services organization was able to:

- Facilitate a major server consolidation effort without impacting user access to data
- Dramatically reduce downtime caused by data migrations from as many as 12 hours to 0
- Streamline storage management and support, freeing up administrators for other tasks
- Enable tiering and ILM strategies that are reducing costs by improving the utilization of storage resources

Summary

Well-positioned to handle ongoing storage growth

Since regaining control of its file server environment, the company has seen major improvements in management efficiencies, which has translated into better service for its users. Operations and engineering resources have been focused on implementing virtualization as part of the firm's global file strategy, promising additional management efficiencies along with further cost savings from reduced space and power demands on its data centers.

"Before F5 Acopia, when one person ran out of space, everyone on the Windows file server was impacted. Now, if a user runs out of space, he is the only one impacted and we can very easily provision more storage without any downtime."

—Global Technology Infrastructure Manager



F5 Networks, Inc.

41 Wellman Street
Lowell, MA 01851
(978) 513-2900 Phone
(978) 513-2990 Fax
www.f5.com
info@f5.com

F5 Networks Asia-Pacific

+65-6533-6103 Phone
+65-6533-6106 Fax
info.asia@f5.com

F5 Networks Ltd. Europe/Middle-East/Africa

+44 (0) 1932 582 000 Phone
+44 (0) 1932 582 001 Fax
emeainfo@f5.com

F5 Networks Japan K.K.

+81-3-5114-3200 Phone
+81-3-5114-3201 Fax
info@f5networks.co.jp