

Canucks Sports & Entertainment wins at the storage expansion game

High performance, cost-efficient, scalable storage with the IBM Storwize V7000

Overview

The need

Canucks Sports & Entertainment needed to expand their storage capacity to support a steady increase in media content while allowing plenty of room for future growth.

The solution

The Canucks organization deployed the IBM Storwize® V7000 storage system with integrated IBM System Storage® Easy Tier® technology.

The benefit

The IBM Storwize V7000 solution enabled the Canucks organization to implement scalable, cost-effective storage that quadrupled their storage capacity and reduced their backup time by 50 percent.

Canucks Sports & Entertainment in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada owns the Vancouver Canucks professional hockey team. This multi-faceted organization hosts more than 100 events per year at Rogers Arena. The Canucks organization also manages supporting functions, such as retail, broadcasting, advertising, promotions, facilities management and websites.

Sizing up the storage situation

Like many organizations, the Canucks have witnessed unprecedented growth in the amount of digital media—video, photography, digital signage and more—which continues to increase year after year. This data growth requires highly scalable storage capacity, and the Canucks IT department has been striving to stay ahead of the game. “The data growth has exploded from all sources within this organization, and there’s no stemming it,” says William Cheng, IT manager for Canucks Sports & Entertainment.

This data includes high-definition video—up to 500 gigabytes per hockey game in raw content—and digital signage, which is displayed across the 550 monitors in Rogers Arena—and the amount continues to grow at a rate of up to 50 percent annually. With the large number of events they host every year, the Canucks had maxed out their storage systems. According to Cheng, their existing HP storage area network (SAN) solution simply did not have the expansion capabilities they were looking for.



“The IBM Storwize V7000 gives us more flexibility and enables us to have more storage space.”

—Chip Suttles, director of technology,
Canucks Sports & Entertainment

The Canucks IT staff typically performs upgrades and maintenance during the hockey off season, but they were facing the fortunate problem of having a shortened off season, due to the team’s extended playoff run to the 2011 Stanley Cup finals. They were also facing key challenges including a limited footprint, rising power and cooling costs, and the need for maximum scalability and compatibility with their current environment. The Canucks needed a solution that would play well with their current team of hardware and management software, and they were working against the clock.

Making a game plan for expansion

After carefully considering options from multiple vendors, and with the guidance of IBM Business Partner Softchoice, the organization decided to implement the IBM Storwize V7000 storage system. This solution proved to be the ideal choice for their various storage needs, which included block and file data. Since video data is unstructured, this requires a storage system that can support file workloads, and the Storwize V7000 can consolidate both block and file workloads into a single storage system. “The V7000 gives us more flexibility and enables us to have more storage space,” says Chip Suttles, director of technology for Canucks Sports & Entertainment.

Demonstrating its I/O flexibility, the Storwize V7000 connected to their existing Fibre Channel infrastructure without requiring additional costs, and it has worked well with their virtual environment. Suttles found that using a direct plug-in for VMware vCenter provided for seamless integration. “It’s actually baked in to the software,” comments Suttles. “It’s an all-in-one stream to manage and access the device.”

Equally valued by the IT staff is the integrated IBM System Storage Easy Tier feature. Using Easy Tier, they have been able to analyze disk usage and implement automatic storage tiering, which provided significant speed improvements. Cheng recognizes the value of the solution’s integrated capabilities for reporting as well. “With a lot of the other vendors, you have to pay for the extra reporting; it doesn’t come straight out of the box. But basic reporting is built into the V7000.”

Suttles and Cheng met several other important goals using the Storwize V7000, such as adding a customer relationship management database, adding inventory support for digital signage and consolidating backups for creative content. The easy-to-use graphical user interface also significantly improved staff productivity, and the three-terabyte hard drives and flexible I/O contributed to a solution that exceeded their expectations.

Solution components

Hardware

- IBM Storwize® V7000

Software

- IBM System Storage® Easy Tier®
 - IBM Tivoli® Storage FlashCopy® Manager
-

Finding success on multiple levels

After implementing the IBM solution, the Canucks quickly met their storage goals and achieved measurable benefits. Suttles says, “We needed something that would be as easy as plug and play.” This proved to be the case, considering that the installation and migration from their previous SAN to the Storwize V7000 took less than one day and required minimal IT resources. The organization was able to fulfill an immediate need by increasing their storage capacity by 400 percent, and they performed the expansion in real time, without any outages.

They realized overall speed improvements soon after deployment, including faster data access, backups and email performance. With Easy Tier technology, the organization was able to significantly improve performance and make better use of their storage capacity with optimized drive usage among solid-state, SAS and SATA drives. They were also able to cut their backup window in half, and were able to increase the backup range for the arena’s security camera footage from 30 to 60 days.

Immediate cost savings were recognized, as well. Due to the built-in I/O flexibility of the Storwize V7000, they were able to leverage the existing Fibre Channel infrastructure instead of having to invest in additional switching. The organization expects to see even more cost savings as they continue to increase their storage capacity in the future, due to the cost-efficient expansion capabilities of the Storwize V7000.

Continuing the winning streak with IBM

The Canucks organization plans to continue their success with IBM, increasing their storage capacity as needed. They also plan to implement additional integrated features of the Storwize V7000, including data compression, deduplication, thin provisioning and IBM Tivoli® Storage FlashCopy® Manager for faster backups and restores.

Regarding the Canucks’ experience with IBM services, Suttles says, “I think it has been more than overwhelmingly positive. IBM has gone out of their way to educate us on the product.”

As Canucks Sports & Entertainment grows and expands to meet future storage needs, they plan to stay connected to IBM and the latest innovations in storage technology. Starting with the solid foundation of the Storwize V7000, they have executed a winning game plan and have found a way to achieve, and surpass, their storage goals.

For more information

For more information on IBM storage solutions, contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit us at: ibm.com/storage

For more information on IBM Business Partner Softchoice, visit: softchoice.com

For more information about the Vancouver Canucks, visit: canucks.nhl.com



© Copyright IBM Corporation 2012

IBM Systems and Technology Group
Route 100
Somers, New York 10589

Produced in the United States of America
June 2012

IBM, the IBM logo, ibm.com, Easy Tier, Storwize, System Storage, and Tivoli are trademarks of International Business Machines Corp., registered in many jurisdictions worldwide. Other product and service names might be trademarks of IBM or other companies. A current list of IBM trademarks is available on the web at "Copyright and trademark information" at ibm.com/legal/copytrade.shtml

This document is current as of the initial date of publication and may be changed by IBM at any time. Not all offerings are available in every country in which IBM operates.

The client examples cited are presented for illustrative purposes only. Actual performance results may vary depending on specific configurations and operating conditions.

It is the user's responsibility to evaluate and verify the operation of any other products or programs with IBM products and programs.

THE INFORMATION IN THIS DOCUMENT IS PROVIDED "AS IS" WITHOUT ANY WARRANTY, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING WITHOUT ANY WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND ANY WARRANTY OR CONDITION OF NON-INFRINGEMENT. IBM products are warranted according to the terms and conditions of the agreements under which they are provided.

Actual available storage capacity may be reported for both uncompressed and compressed data and will vary and may be less than stated.



Please Recycle