WHOA.com Builds Secure Public and Private Cloud Services with Tintri VMstore™

VMstore

WHOA.com is a next-generation, ISO 27001, HIPAA, and PCI DSS 3.1-certified, secure public and private cloud hosting provider. It provides cloud services from three tier-4 or greater data centers, distributed across the United States for geo-redundancy.

The Challenges: Aging Storage Systems Are Expensive and Complex to Maintain

WHOA.com made the decision to replace its legacy storage systems in 2016. "The NetApp systems were very expensive, and the maintenance costs were skyrocketing," explained Brock Mowry, co-founder and VP of infrastructure at WHOA.com. "We wanted to find a solution that would lower our initial purchase costs, as well as our operational overhead. We were looking for something that was simpler and more scalable so we didn't have to put so much effort into managing our storage systems."

The Solution: Tintri VMstore

WHOA.com purchased six Tintri hybrid and all-flash systems in 2016. "I've been following Tintri for quite a while," admitted Mowry. "I was impressed with the VMstore system's technical specs and marketing information. When I found out that several of my colleagues were now working for Tintri—that gave me the confidence to run the PoC."

Mowry did evaluate several other vendors' storage options before choosing VMstore, with the exclusion of any hyperconverged offerings. "Hyperconverged infrastructure doesn't work for us in our environment because we are a multi-tenant cloud provider," Mowry explained. "When you're building a cloud platform, you're basically building boxes, inside of boxes, inside of boxes. The customer is ultimately in the very bottom box. The issue I have with hyperconverged is that it is not a 'big enough box' for me to be able to allocate it out efficiently to all of our public cloud customers."

"We put one of Tintri's hybrid flash systems into our development lab, because that's where we're developing a simple DR product for our customers," Mowry reported. "Another one of the hybrid systems has been dedicated to one of our major private cloud customers. We also purchased two all-flash systems for our public cloud offerings."

"NetApp advertises their upgrades as 'non-disruptive', but I can tell you from experience, that isn't always the case," Mowry said. "With NetApp, it took several weeks just to prepare for the upgrades. Plus, we had to schedule massive maintenance windows for the upgrades, in case we experienced outages while moving customers from one platform to another. Once we had finished all of the preparation, the actual upgrade process would still take several hours."

"We spent an extensive amount of time deploying our NetApp systems," he added. "It always took several weeks after receiving the NetApp shipment to reach the point where we could actually sell the cloud service to our customers. The VMstore systems were much easier to deploy. Instead of the multiple weeks it took to deploy NetApp, it takes just a few days with VMstore."

WHOA.com recently upgraded its VMstore systems. "We scheduled the upgrade during our standard maintenance window just to be cautious, but we didn't experience any issues at all. It's a very simple and easy process compared to NetApp—we were in and out in less than an hour. Not only did we eliminate several weeks of upfront planning, we didn't have to coordinate the upgrade with so many different teams. With VMstore, only our VMware engineers had to be involved."

Challenges
- Aging NetApp storage systems were too expensive and difficult to maintain

Solution
- Tintri VMstore hybrid and all-flash systems

Results
- Highly reliable, high-performance storage platform for public and private cloud services
- Reduced both CAPEX and OPEX
- Cut storage maintenance time in half
- Enabled fast, non-disruptive upgrades
- Reduced storage footprint and power by 4x

Tintri
Intelligent Infrastructure

The Results: Increased Performance, Reduced Maintenance Time, Increased CAPEX and OPEX

"By moving to VMstore, we were able to cut the amount of time we were spending on storage-related work in half," Mowry said. "And by using Tintri Global Center, we have gained a lot more visibility into the performance of individual virtual machines. That level of detail was simply not possible with NetApp's management tools. With performance statistics at the VM level, it is much easier to troubleshoot any storage-related issues."

"VMstore is much more cost-effective than the NetApp platform," noted Mowry. "We haven't gone back to crunch those numbers to get the exact ROI, but we estimate that it would have cost us not only more dollars, but also efficiencies as we need fewer employees to manage VMstore versus NetApp. When we add in the ongoing maintenance costs of our previous platform, the price difference is staggering."

VMstore also enabled WHOA.com to significantly shrink its data center footprint. "Our NetApp cluster consumed an entire rack," Mowry reported. "We replaced that cluster with just two VMstore systems, consuming only 6RU. In addition to the smaller footprint, VMstore uses only one fourth of the power. Although reducing power wasn't our primary goal, saving energy is always a great side benefit. Lowering our power and data center footprint obviously helps our organization's finances, but any benefit that we can pass back to the environment is definitely welcome as well."

"There is a very proactive element to Tintri Support," said Mowry. "We've had very few interactions with the support team since the systems are so reliable, but we did have an internal card failure in one of the units. We weren't even aware of the issue, since it didn't impact our system. When Tintri received the alert, they contacted us and we were able to quickly replace that card without any impact to customers. That was very impressive."

WHOA.com is now getting ready to launch a new project on VMstore. "We have a legacy VMware environment with a large customer footprint that we need to move over to our next generation VMware platform with minimal disruption. We found a really great way to utilize the VMstore snapshots to ease that transition. What would have been a massive undertaking to migrate a customer over with NetApp has now been reduced to just a few clicks using the VMstore feature set. Not only is VMstore saving us a lot of money, it is definitely making our lives a lot easier!"

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>
> *Brock Mowry, Co-Founder and VP of Infrastructure, WHOA.com*

Experience Different! For more information on how Tintri VMstore can turbo-charge your business success through a simple, Intelligent Infrastructure, visit tintri.com/vmstore.

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