

CASE STUDY

Real Estate Council of Alberta Selects Tintri VMstore™

VMstore

Real Estate Council Alberta

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The Real Estate Council of Alberta (RECA) is the independent governing authority that sets, regulates, and enforces standards for Alberta's real estate brokerage, mortgage brokerage, and real estate appraisal industries. RECA's mandate is to protect consumers, and to provide services that enhance and improve the real estate industry and the business of industry professionals.

The Challenge: Aging Storage Due for Refresh

RECA's IT Manager, Stefan Myroniuk, manages the in-house support team, and ensures that all infrastructure systems fulfill the company's business needs.

"We have two sites that are connected—our main office here in Calgary and the ViaWest data center," Myroniuk reported. "We had deficiencies in our network design and we were experiencing several pain points with our backup systems competing with other business-critical application traffic. The quality of service on our network was becoming unmanageable."

RECA was relying on a mix of IT infrastructure solutions, including several five-year-old Nimble storage devices. "Traditional storage can be complex, and our organization heavily relied on contractors to manage our storage systems," Myroniuk said. "Prior to VMstore, we had used more than 90% of our capacity and I knew that we would be hitting a wall in a few months."

The Solution: Tintri VMstore

Myroniuk started the search for new IT solutions at VMworld 2016. "Our goal was to look at our infrastructure and network design holistically to select better technology both here at the office and at the hosted data center," he said. "I visited the Tintri booth, and also looked at the other solutions such as Simplivity, Nutanix, Nimble, IBM, Lenovo, Datrium, and Cisco. My goal was to find an innovative solution that was easier to manage, so our organization would not have to rely on contractors for storage management and disaster recovery."

Myroniuk conducted a total-cost-of-ownership analysis on several of the proposed options, and held roundtable discussions with the IT team to decide on the right solution. "The concept of a no-LUN, VM-aware technology was very appealing to all of us," noted Myroniuk. "The combination of VMstore's innovative technology, cost, value proposition, and Tintri's partnership with Charter Telecom made it clear that VMstore was the best-fit solution. This is a five-year investment for our organization. We needed to feel confident that we had the right people and partnerships to support these systems for the next five years. Our team decided to move forward with Tintri's proposal and purchase the all-flash systems."

RECA purchased its first two VMstore systems in January 2017. With the help of Tintri and Charter Telecom, they deployed one of the two T5040s at the company's main office in Calgary, and the other at the hosted co-location center.

The Results: Fast Deployment, Increased Performance

The initial VMstore deployment was intuitive, according to Myroniuk. "The biggest technical challenge during the implementation was with the new network design," he explained. "The VMstore systems were straightforward to configure and update. The only deployment issue we had deal with was integrating the AppFabric network technology into our existing network. Even though it wasn't a storage issue, the Tintri support team helped us determine and resolve a networking issue."

The difference between standard infrastructure and Intelligent Infrastructure was evident with respect to system management. "VMstore is much more intuitive to manage than traditional storage," Myroniuk reported. "Tintri Global Center enables us to observe both systems from one central point and create service groups with different backup policies for each environment."

Challenges

- Aging Nimble storage environment was due for a refresh
- Existing systems were hard to manage and did not provide enough performance

Solution

- Tintri VMstore

Results

- Simplified storage management
- Eliminated the need for third-party storage specialists
- Obtained a 4.2x performance boost for customer portal
- Increased speed of Veeam backups by 5x



Our VMstore systems allow for easy provisioning in vCenter and can be managed by anyone on our IT team. For me as an IT manager, that's a big win."

The two VMstore systems are now being used for RECA's large customer portal that runs on Microsoft SharePoint. They are also using VMstore for the agency's Microsoft SQL applications, CRM Dynamics, VMware Horizon virtual desktops, domain controllers, load balancers, and Palo Alto firewall. "Our applications were not running very efficiently," Myroniuk admitted. "After resolving our network issues and moving all of our VMs from the Nimble to VMstore, we started seeing a lot of performance gains, including a 4.2x performance increase on our customer portal. This is a big benefit for all of our customers, especially the ones that access our applications from mobile devices."

RECA is also running its Veeam backup software on VMstore. "Veeam used to put a high workload on our network," Myroniuk explained. "We could only run Veeam backups during off hours, because it would adversely affect application performance. We can now run Veeam during regular business hours, 5x faster, without impacting our users. Switching to VMstore was a big plus for our team as well as for our customers."

"We are replicating all business-critical data between our two sites hourly," Myroniuk shared. "We were debating whether we wanted to purchase VMware's Site Recovery Manager, but we decided to leverage the built-in replication engine within the VMstore system between both sites. Keeping it simple was a good call."

"We haven't done a full hard fail-over test yet, but we've done several spot tests that have worked very well," said Myroniuk. "In case of a disaster, we will be able to perform a few actions on the data center, and quickly restore our entire site from one location to the other. The VMstore systems provide us with a visible Recovery Point Objective, and the protection policies are the foundation of our disaster recovery plan."

RECA will be moving from its existing headquarters location to a new building in a few months. "We will perform a fail-over to the VMstore at our co-location site to facilitate the move. Once we have failed-over, we will physically move all of our HQ infrastructure to the new building, over a weekend. Once we're done with the move, our plan is to Storage vMotion services back to the new office site. We are leveraging our metro availability with two sites for our backup strategy. I'd like to extend that to the cloud as our next step. It should be easy to do with VMstore."

"Our policy is to have business-critical information running on the VMstore systems," Myroniuk said. "We will continue to use traditional storage for development environments and non-critical workloads. We don't carry an enterprise support contract on those storage systems."

"The other vendors' solutions simply do not match VMstore's feature set," Myroniuk concluded. "The advantage of VM-aware storage for the automation, visibility, and granular management of every virtual machine is hard to beat. By moving to VMstore, our staff can now focus on more valuable projects that directly support our business, versus re-engineering the plumbing every time a change is required."

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Stefan Myroniuk, IT Manager, Real Estate Council of Alberta (RECA)

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