

Mettenmeier Deploys Tintri VMstore™ to Accelerate Virtual Workloads




Mettenmeier is a software consultancy firm, a service and solution provider, and one of Europe's leading Geographical Information Systems (GIS) specialists. The company supports owners and operators of critical utility networks in the gas, water, and electric industries,

helping them manage their networks by implementing and deploying enterprise-wide business applications. Mettenmeier is dedicated to the SMB sector, and although the focus of the company has adapted over the past two years, at its heart the business is and always has been a high-level technology company. The firm is located in Paderborn, Germany, and employs about 180 specialists in a layered portfolio of software and IT solution development, product support, and training. With IT and critical infrastructures becoming increasingly essential in a digital world, Mettenmeier is a key player when managing and securing networks of all kinds.

The Challenge: Growing Virtualized Footprint Overwhelms SAN-Storage and Raises Complexity

As a technology company, Mettenmeier itself possesses an expert level of know-how in the IT world, running its own data center in the headquarters in Paderborn. Michael Siemen, Deputy Manager IT Services at Mettenmeier described the company's ethos, as well as the specific IT services needed by the business: "Mettenmeier is different than many other companies of comparable size. We have a multitude of very different layers that reflect the diverse nature of services we offer. Our training center for instance, with its 100 desks, poses totally different challenges for our internal IT than, let's say, normal offices with administrative tasks. Most of our employees are also in research and development, and therefore use a large variety of systems."

To support the IT needs of staff in all areas, Mettenmeier runs an almost fully virtualized data center. Virtualization started around 2009, when the firm had around 100 physical servers in use. Over the years, its virtualized footprint grew up to more than 300 VMs, which is almost 99% of all servers. The company also has Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) with Horizon in place for concurrent 100 desktops. In 2009, the firm also invested in a new SAN storage system, to underpin their entire infrastructure for the foreseeable future.

As Mettenmeier's virtualized footprint grew, so did the requirements for the storage system in terms of capacity and performance. Mettenmeier met those requirements with regular expansions and upgrades, including a hybrid-flash upgrade at a later stage. What could not be changed however, was the complexity of the system, which was fundamentally rooted in the SAN technology it is built on. Siemen explained: "SAN management in itself is very complex. The system needs its own iSCSI cabling and a dedicated specialist to manage it. I have been managing our SAN solution for many years but as we have a quite small IT team, we share the responsibilities between us. Nonetheless SAN-management is so complex, other team members could only manage very simple tasks when I was away, which is of course not ideal."

After expanding the campuses' virtual footprint to VDI with concurrent 100 desktops, Siemen and the IT Team noticed that the lack of performance on the storage layer would eventually become an issue. This was discussed frequently with their partner MightyCare, in order to find a resolution to the problem.

The Solution: Tintri VMstore

In early 2017, the team decided that it was time to upgrade its storage solution to address the performance issues. MightyCare proposed two possible solutions: either upgrading the existing EqualLogic yet again, with a Dell Compellent system, or adding VMstore. After comparing the specifications and feature sets of the two competing systems, Mettenmeier instantly decided to test a VMstore system.

Challenges

- Insufficient performance for critical workloads
- Easier storage management for virtual environment
- Needed non-disruptive updates
- Needed NFS support to leverage existing 10GB network

Solution

- Tintri VMstore and Tintri Global Center

Results

- Simplified management
- Increased visibility, enabling faster troubleshooting across infrastructure
- Improved performance
- Entire team can do storage management
- Non-disruptive updates without service impact

Mettenmeier installed the VMstore system in a very short space of time, and soon moved the first workloads onto the system to start testing. The result was an IT Manager's dream: "Generally, if you manage to boost performance by 10 or 20%, nobody will really notice or say anything. However, after shifting some workloads onto VMstore, users started to call us, asking for information on what we had done. Their systems were suddenly so fast, and they wanted to let us know that whatever it was that we changed, we should continue to do. Processes on our Domino Server, that previously took around eight seconds to process, were now done immediately with one click. The system was performing so much better that we were really tempted to move more and more operational workloads onto VMstore."

The Result: Better Performance, Simplified Management, Faster Troubleshooting

Not only did VMstore provide a performance boost to Mettenmeier's virtual footprint, but storage management was also simplified, as VMstore offers full visibility down to the VM level. Siemen explained: "With the previous SAN storage, we had to invest a significant amount of time into storage management, training, and coordination, in order to ensure the team could manage some rudimentary processes, even in my absence.

Also, we could only see large volumes and the workloads running on them—I could not simply analyze and review how one single VM on the storage performed. Now, the entire administrative level has just been erased. Even if a larger VM has to be deployed in my absence, my colleagues can simply carry out this task in a few clicks." Further notable benefits include the duplication of clones that save storage space, and VMstore's ability to run updates in the background, without any disruption of service.

Rüdiger Liebegut, Key Account Manager at Mettenmeier's partner MightyCare, commented: "Mettenmeier is a prime example of a small or medium sized business in Germany. When reaching higher levels of virtualization, these businesses can benefit a lot from a second storage layer dedicated for virtualized workloads. With a tiered approach like this, they can still use their older IT for mass storage and the new purpose-built storage for virtualization."

By deploying VMstore, Mettenmeier successfully solved their performance issues and freed their IT Team from tedious and complex SAN Management. Michael Siemen summed up the decision to deploy VMstore: "VMstore is much more than just storage. By deploying VMstore, we have reached all the company's performance goals that we intended to achieve, while also decreasing the complexity of the storage management immensely. We can now spend more time on other projects that help us to increase overall efficiency and quality."

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*Michael Siemen, Deputy IT Manager,
Mettenmeier GmbH*

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