



Lambton College chooses Tintri for Campus-wide VDI deployment



Lambton College is in its 47th year, and in that time the College has gained worldwide recognition as a specialized institution. Lambton currently has its main campus in Sarnia, Ontario. The Fire & Public Safety Centre of Excellence is located just outside the city limits and they also have an Employment and Learning Centre in Petrolia. They also have multiple campuses located in China.

In the past 46 years, the College has been working hard to provide even more for its 3,600+ full-time and 6,500 part-time students. The College continues to grow every year by offering new programs, new research opportunities and improved lab and classroom facilities.

Challenges

The college embraced server virtualization for more than five years before they decided to virtualize their desktop environment. In wanting to extend the benefits of server virtualization to the desktops, the hope was to preserve the same positive user experience as a physical desktop infrastructure, in an easily scalable model. Their IT environment is 85% virtualized and with that experience, Lambton College wanted to deploy virtual desktops to improve access to services for students.

Using the existing fiber SAN environment, the virtual desktop environment was rolled out, and that's when they started to experience performance issues. Management complexity with the traditional storage was an issue, "so we considered a new SAN to better support the VDI installation", said Terry Babbey, Director of IT at Lambton.

Since one of the major considerations for the VDI project was to provide a user experience on par with physical desktops, that meant they needed ample performance from the storage system. Setting up LUNs, creating multiple datastores, zoning, and ongoing maintenance would have been a huge issue for a large-scale deployment on traditional storage. Currently 400 desktops are virtualized, out of a total of 1400 desktops. They needed a simple plug-and-play solution for the VDI storage.

Tintri Solution

Babbey and his staff evaluated several vendors, from traditional offerings (HP, IBM) to emerging technologies (Nutanix, Nimble), before choosing Tintri. They deployed a T540 unit with 13.5TB capacity in a single datastore for serving virtual desktops. One of the immediate benefits they experienced was the time savings; not having to carve out LUNs when providing storage to the VDI side, Tintri O/S upgrades were simple, and overall administration has been easy. "The call-home feature has been great, no need to worry about infrastructure on the back end," says Lori Atkin, systems administrator at Lambton College.

Industry

- Education

Geography

- Ontario, Canada

Website

- <http://www.lambtoncollege.ca/>

Virtualization Environment

- VMware vSphere 5.5
- VMware Horizon™ View
- 400 Desktops virtualized
- 85% virtualized

VM profile

- OS: Windows 7
- Virtualized applications:
Standard office and student apps

Key Challenges

- Performance issues when using existing fiber SAN storage for VDI
- Management complexity with traditional storage

Tintri Solution

- Tintri VMstore™ T540

Primary use case

- Virtual Desktop Infrastructure

Business Benefits

- Ease of implementation translated to more available IT resources
- Service levels to students can improve with simpler management

Summary

"We had zero downtime when we performed the Tintri O/S upgrades, it was just simple and seamless. The best thing about Tintri is the ease of implementation and low admin requirements," says Atkin. "Performance and speed of provisioning are also a big deal for us. The ability to analyze performance at the VDI desktop level in just a few clicks ensures a quick response time to any user concerns." Simpler management and reduction in complexity translate to lower costs, which is crucial to private educational institutions. "We really appreciate the product and it has met our needs," concludes Babbey. "The simple intuitive interface and ease of configuration requires less staff time to support resulting in more time available for focus on new and emerging initiatives. As the College continues to expand and storage needs are driven up, Tintri will definitely be on the College's short-list."

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