VOX CASE STUDY

InfiniBox from Infinidat

Infinidat, a global leader in enterprise petabyte-scale data storage solutions, has

high performance, high capacity and 100% availability InfiniBox enterprise storage

Enterprise storage that enables competitive advantage

revolutionised both the storage platform and Customer Experience (CX) for Vox Telecom (Vox), a leading South African ICT and Telecoms operator. The cost-effective,

solution from Infinidat plays a central role in supporting the entire Vox offering, improving the performance of all services across the business.

THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

At the start of 2019, Vox faced two significant challenges around its existing storage platform. Firstly, the five-year maintenance period was coming to an end and secondly, the company was running out of capacity a lot faster than anticipated. Adding to these issues, Vox was unable to use the full storage capacity with the existing solution, as some 40TB was required to remain 'unused' for the system to function.

"We pushed the capacity limit of the system quicker than anticipated and with the maintenance extension option also prohibitively expensive, we took the decision to perform a technology refresh and replace the platform with a new solution," explains Keith Laaks, Executive Head: Technology at Vox.

Vox needed a cost-effective, high-performance storage array for its hosting environment, to assist in meeting customer demands and rampant growth. The company also required an agile partner that would be able to deliver quickly. After evaluating 12 different storage arrays on criteria such as speed, Inputs/Outputs Per Second (IOPS), storage efficiencies, compression, deduplication and redundancy, Vox selected the InfiniBox solution from Infinidat, supplied by local partner Datacentrix. "Infinidat addresses the mid- to high-end storage market with a cost-competitive solution and innovative technology, and we provide Tier 1 partner services for them in the South

THE BUSINESS SOLUTION

African market. Datacentrix took care of pre-sales functions, including workshop sessions with Vox and Infinidat representatives, as well as post-sale service and support. We were the technical delivery partner throughout its implementation and now provide ongoing support," says Schalk Gouws, Account Manager at Datacentrix Two InfiniBox F4304 arrays were deployed, one at each of Vox's data

centres in Johannesburg within the production and Disaster Recovery (DR) environments, respectively. For workloads with low Recovery Point Objective (RPO) and Recovery Time Objective (RTO) requirements, VMware's vSphere replication feature is used. "These arrays primarily service our virtual servers, database and voice infrastructure and also play a key role in our data protection strategy, allowing seamless integration with our data protection vendor," says Selby Maake, Cloud Storage and Virtualisation Engineer at Vox Telecom. "Each array delivers 1.7 petabytes (PB) of virtual capacity with the actual available capacity variable depending on the compression ratio, which gives us far more storage for an extremely cost-effective rate per terabyte."

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the solution began in September 2019 and took a month to complete. Local Infinidat partner, Datacentrix, worked closely with Vox on the installation, helping them take the project from racking, stacking and initialisation through switching, provisioning and testing and finally into the production environment. Infinidat also provided certified administration training through Datacentrix, flying in experts from their head office in Israel to South Africa to ensure the migration was seamless.

"Thanks to excellent relationships, solid teams and effective planning from the outset, the implementation went smoothly and no challenges were experienced. The training and support provided by Infinidat throughout the journey ensured we got it right the first time. The proof of our success came from our customers' own users, who noticed performance improvements without being aware that a storage upgrade had been performed," says Laaks.

BENEFITS

As a hosting provider, Vox must meet customer demand for capacity, so the InfiniBox arrays were ideal due to their flexibility regarding scale and ease-of-use for critical workloads. Also, they deliver superior performance with a low total cost of ownership (TCO) without compromising on the CX.

"One of the key benefits we have realised results from the low touch configuration and administration of the InfiniBox arrays, allowing us to provision new services and solutions seamlessly and with minimum manual interaction. Our previous solution was laborious to configure, taking up to an hour with multiple steps, increased complexity and room for error. The Infinidat solution takes less than a minute, improving our customer service whilst freeing up time for our teams to attend to other business needs," Maake adds.

Redundancy is another critical feature of Vox's operations. Previously, the company experienced some issues with failures, so a rock-solid solution was required. InfiniBox's triple redundancy controllers guarantee uptime, ensuring Vox can always deliver uninterrupted service to both internal and external customers.

Hayden Sadler, Infinidat Country Manager for South Africa, adds, "With the InfiniBox arrays, Vox currently experiences sub-one millisecond latencies across the infrastructure and a minimum cache hit ratio of 95%, both of which are extremely valuable for providing superior performance."

"Aside from our connectivity, broadband access and voice solutions, our cloud offering is a growing element of our business, with impressive market penetration figures. We needed the right platform to support our growth goals, and storage is the key ingredient. The InfiniBox solution supports our requirements by delivering the right blend of cost-effective storage and high performance, coupled with the ability to slot seamlessly into our existing infrastructure," says Laaks.

"Infinidat also provides excellent proactive monitoring and local support through Datacentrix to ensure constant uptime and availability, which are critical to Vox from an operations perspective. We are extremely happy with the platform and will likely expand our storage with additional InfiniBox arrays when the time comes," he concludes.

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