

@work

Real challenges, real solutions, technology for the real world



TIMMONS GROUP AT-A-GLANCE

Timmons Group, headquartered in Richmond, Va., is a diversified civil engineering, Geospatial technology services, and collaborative environmental design firm.

Business Challenge

Replace a legacy storage area network while still providing access to large files and creating a scalable centralized storage solution.

Technology Solution

Consolidating four SAN file servers and six NAS file servers using EMC's CLARiiON CX3-20 UltraScale FC/iSCSI system, Celerra networked attached storage gateway, and Replication Manager software.

Payoff

Backup time was decreased by 75 percent, while availability increased to 99.9 percent. The company will see a return-on-investment in just over five years with payback in less than three.

Timmons Group Storing More, Working Less

Timmons Group, a 350-person civil engineering and collaborative environmental design group generates massive amounts of data due to the nature of its work. The company is constantly creating, using, and storing real-time photography and 3-D virtual models of design elements such as utility poles and underground pipelines. A single project may eat up 500MB of storage space.

Last spring, the company, in a bid to reduce data backup and migration time while simultaneously improve availability and storage retrieval speed, decided to replace its HP legacy storage area network—a series of four SAN file servers and six NAS files servers—with several EMC hardware and software elements including

documents, .pdf files and other departmental data such as RFPs and scope of work."

The EMC Celerra networked attached storage gateway connected to the CX3-20, storing critical information such as the company's email. This also resulted in a reduction of servers, taking the company from four file servers down to one. The best part: those servers could be redeployed elsewhere in the company and the overall management of the Celerra is significantly easier and streamlined.

The final piece of the puzzle—EMC's Replication Manager—helps the two systems communicate and significantly increases the transfer rate reducing backup time by 75 percent.

"The costs savings are enormous, especially since it gives us the flexibility to

It used to take us 16 hours to clone our SQL Server 2005 databases to a backup server and then backup that data to tape for offsite storage. We've narrowed that backup window by over 250 percent. Now we clone our entire 1.5TB of data and back up to tape in about six hours.

—Bryan Moore, IT infrastructure manager for Timmons Group

EMC's CLARiiON CX3-20 UltraScale FC/iSCSI system, a Celerra networked attached storage gateway, and its Replication Manager software.

NO MORE WAITING

The migration from what were essentially six disparate servers to a single storage system made a big difference to the firm. For example, the dual-protocol EMC CLARiiON CX3-20 UltraScale FC/iSCSI system features combined fibre channel and iSCSI connectivity in a single storage array so users can easily and cost-effectively consolidate information from and between disparate networks.

"By using the EMC CLARiiON CX3-20's fibre channel connectivity for our large-scale application files and Oracle 10G and Microsoft SQL Server 2005 databases, we avoid bottlenecks when pulling that data over the local area network," says Moore. "Our development environment is less demanding, so we use the CLARiiON's iSCSI connectivity to provide a staging area for developing and testing code, as well as to house e-mail, Word

handle whatever environments our clients might have in the future without deploying additional servers. As a result, we're able to reach out to a much broader client market," says Moore.

BY THE LIGHT OF THE MOON

Overall data availability is up, too. Data migration time has been reduced by 81 percent, while availability has hit the 99.9 percent mark. This means that engineers don't have to wait for important documents or project elements, making them more productive during the day—productivity is up 190 hours annually—since the majority of backups can now be run at night so network performance doesn't lag when people are in the office.

"It used to take us 16 hours to clone our SQL Server 2005 databases to a backup server and then backup that data to tape for offsite storage," says Moore. "With EMC Replication Manager, we've narrowed that backup window by over 250 percent. Now we clone our entire 1.5TB of data and back up to tape in about six hours."

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