

Nexenta Provides escape with Enterprise Storage Functionality, Cost Controls



Key Highlights

Industry: Design, Development, and Hosting Service Provider

Challenge:

- Greater speed needed for performance upgrade
- Scalability to handle company growth
- Aging in-house system
- Cost controls

Solution: NexentaStor 3.0.4 using OpenSource technology

Benefits:

- Greater speed and performance
- Better flexibility
- Simpler management
- Improved functionality
- Lowered overall storage costs
- Consolidated physical servers from ten to three
- No longer tied to expensive proprietary hardware for replacement parts
- Incorporated previous solutions into Nexenta infrastructure

Business Overview

With offices in Berlin, Frankfurt, and Vienna, escape GmbH offers design, development, and hosting services to customers in the online, telecom, and media industries. Customers include BMW, Nintendo, Vodafone, and Leica.

escape has one of Germany's main mobile content providers among its customers and has an SQL database with more than one billion records. It was running approximately 100 virtual machines and 10 physical servers at its data centers. Other infrastructure included an SQL database, which currently manages more than one billion records for one of Germany's main mobile content providers.

One of the biggest challenges the company faced as a service provider was obtaining the functionality of an enterprise storage solution while keeping costs in check.

Challenges

escape was using a 16TB block only storage system (iStor iSCSI-Storage System) that was getting old. As it was an SMB product, the system wasn't geared to handle the growth escape was experiencing, and the company's original solution didn't offer the unified approach escape required.

As a result, escape was encountering problems with storage speed, capacity, performance, and management. With an environment that included Citrix XenServer, MySQL, Apache, Linux, and Windows, the company decided it needed to find an alternative unified system that could handle file and block, while including snapshot and deduplication capabilities. In short, escape was looking for an enterprise storage solution.

“Nexenta provides a single consolidated interface that offers the right performance, with better functionality, at a fraction of the price of other industry leading NAS solutions.”

—Thomas Wenzel, Partner, escape GmbH

Solution Overview

The first companies escape looked at for new solutions were Sun and NetApp. escape liked the features the Sun solution offered but was deterred by the price, which was well beyond its budget. On a visit to the CeBIT trade fair in Hanover, escape representatives visited the Nexenta stall and discovered ZFS. Until that point, the company had not considered open source technology, believing it would not be able to compete with the capabilities offered by the likes of NetApp.

When it discovered that Nexenta was ZFS-based, and offered the same features as the Sun solution at a hugely reduced cost, escape was able to get a 24TB Nexenta NAS for the same price as a 5TB system from rival vendors. It swiftly abandoned any negative preconceptions it may have held about open source technology.

The Nexenta Solution

By opting for a 24TB Nexenta NAS, escape was able to significantly reduce costs by cutting the number of physical servers at the company from ten to three, which connect via iSCSI and NFS to the Nexenta NAS.

Another big attraction was escape's ability to retain its older 16TB iStor system and incorporate it into the new infrastructure, rather than having to throw it out. The 24TB Nexenta NAS and 16TB iStor system back up to a 48TB Openfiler (an operating system that provides file-based network-attached storage and block-based storage area network) located three kilometres away over a 1GB fibre link. To maximise performance, the read/write caches use separate memory, while solid-state disks (SSDs) are used for the writes to optimise performance.

Business Results

In addition to providing escape with better pricing, functionality, and support, deploying a Nexenta solution has given the company greater flexibility and a better feature set. Resiliency is strong but if anything fails, it's much easier for the company to get a replacement part and reboot because it is not tied to using expensive, proprietary parts.

escape now is able to run RAID 7 triple parity and the drives perform well. The robustness of the Nexenta solution, allied with much easier management, means the company spends less time dealing with storage issues and more time on its core business.

Business Impact

Using Nexenta, escape was able to implement an enterprise storage solution with reduced costs, greater performance, better flexibility, simpler management, and improved functionality. It lowered overall storage costs by consolidating the number of physical servers from ten to three. In addition, the company was no longer tied to expensive proprietary hardware for replacement parts and escape was able to retain its previous solutions and incorporate them into the Nexenta infrastructure.

System Configuration

- NexentaStor 3.0.4
- 1 Intel SR2625UR Head XEON E5520 72TB
- LSO 9200-8E
- 2*Intel X25E 64GB
- 1JBOD Supermicro
- 14*Seagate 2TB Constellation ES SAS-2 24x7



Nexenta Systems is the leading supplier of enterprise-class OpenStorage solutions. Its flagship software-only platform, NexentaStor, delivers high-performance, ultra-scalable, cloud- and virtualization-optimized storage solutions.

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