GYLDENDAL

Danish Publisher Gets Back on Hybrid Track With Nutanix

Nutanix Enterprise Cloud enables Gyldendal to move forward with renewed confidence on journey to hybrid cloud

INDUSTRY
Publishing

BENEFITS
- Zero downtime since deployment of Nutanix Enterprise Cloud

- 5x improvement in SQL Server performance with 350 databases across 40+ server instances consolidated onto single Microsoft SQL cluster

- Immediate 10% saving on TCO from full virtualisation using Nutanix AHV hypervisor

- 70% reduction in operational costs going forward using single integrated tool to manage physical and virtual infrastructure

- Improved security from fast routine patching of all infrastructure components

- Single point of support plus greater insight into workload performance

BUSINESS BENEFITS

Recognising the importance of the cloud to its business going forward, Danish educational publisher Gyldendal had opted to update its legacy on-premise infrastructure as part of a hybrid cloud approach to IT. Unfortunately, the hyperconverged infrastructure solution chosen failed to live up to expectations, resulting in frequent outages and costly downtime which was seriously impacting the company's ability to do business. Switching to the Nutanix Enterprise Cloud solved these and other issues while also boosting performance, slashing operational costs and putting Gyldendal back on track towards building a scalable, easy to manage and highly available hybrid cloud IT solution.

> "Our initial hyperconverged solution proved unreliable and poorly supported, not only putting an immense strain on the IT team but affecting the business as a whole. Something had to be done and Nutanix did it, giving us what we thought we were getting in the first place and a lot more besides."
>
> – Thomas Knappe, Head of IT Operations, Gyldendal

CHALLENGES

As part of long-term plans to build a hybrid cloud infrastructure, Gyldendal had opted to replace its legacy on-premise technology with a hyperconverged solution. However, as Head of IT Operations, explains, the initial mixed product set chosen, came up short in a number of key areas.

SOLUTION
Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform
Prism management plane
Nutanix AHV hypervisor

Applications
- 500+ hosted VMs

- Microsoft SQL Server

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"Our first hyperconverged solution gave us the scalability we wanted and to a degree, addressed many of the management issues around our legacy platforms," he said, "however, right from the outset, we had serious problems with availability. In fact, system crashes became commonplace calling for lengthy recovery procedures during which some of our systems were completely offline. We also had issues with support with no one vendor prepared to take ownership of the problems, and lengthy waits for patches which rarely provided a complete fix."

After a year of continual problems and no definitive solution in sight, Knappe and his team decided to cut their losses and look for an alternative solution. A return to an updated legacy architecture was quickly discounted and the decision made to install a replacement Nutanix Enterprise Cloud as a way of delivering a more reliable hyperconverged infrastructure.

"The Nutanix Enterprise Cloud certainly looked like the answer," continued Knappe, "but we didn't have time to run any trials to check it out ourselves. We needed to do something immediately, so I gave Nutanix just over a month, telling them that it had to work, or I'd be out of a job!".

SOLUTION

In fact, it took just a week to install the first Nutanix Enterprise Cloud cluster in the Gyldendal data centre and start migrating workloads. In total, just over 500 VMs were moved with the migration all done in working hours, with no disruption to service and within that one-month deadline.

One of the issues with the previous solution was its use of the legacy hypervisor, with the hardware vendor often blaming it for its lack of stability and vice versa. With that in mind, Knappe opted to switch to the Nutanix AHV hypervisor as it is directly supported by the Nutanix team as part of the Enterprise Cloud solution. It also requires no additional licencing, saving Gyldendal an estimated 500,000 Danish Crowns (approx. $73.5K) per annum.

"Although appreciable, the cost savings were just a bonus," commented Knappe. "The hypervisor is fast becoming a commodity and there were no good technical reasons for sticking with VMware, so we went with AHV which does the job and also enables us to manage our virtual resources from the same console as the rest of the infrastructure."

Completing the initial install, the company also proceeded to deploy a second cluster at another location, specifically to address the backup and recovery issues associated with the first hyperconverged deployment.

CUSTOMER OUTCOMES

One unexpected benefit of the Nutanix migration has been a huge 5-fold improvement in SQL Server performance despite previously employing an all flash solution with NVMe acceleration. Knappe is also surprised at just how often they make use of the improved backup and recovery facilities. "It's just so quick and easy to roll back a VM that we now do it to as a quick fix when issues arise following a Microsoft update. That way we can sort out such problems in our own time without affecting system performance or availability."

The most noticeable outcome, however, has been a complete turnaround in availability with no downtime at all since powering up the Nutanix Enterprise Cloud. Moreover, the IT team now has a single, highly responsive, single point of contact at Nutanix which it can call on to provide assistance.

"It's totally transformed our lives," explains Knappe. "A lot of the maintenance is now done automatically so we're no longer firefighting all the time and have a much more up to date and secure infrastructure as a result. We also have time to investigate other features of the Enterprise Cloud which will enable us to move forwards to a hybrid cloud infrastructure."

NEXT STEPS

Plans for a hybrid cloud will determine what Gyldendal do next, with Knappe, for example, hoping to be able to balance workloads - both locally and out to the cloud - and automate the processes involved using Nutanix technologies. He is also planning to make use of Nutanix Flow to support a micro-segmentation project previously considered too complex, and at hosting desktops for local and remote workers using Nutanix Xi Frame.

"We bought into the Nutanix solution as a better hyperconverged infrastructure that was both scalable and highly available but that's not all it has to offer," he commented. "Nutanix as a company knows where the cloud is going, and the Enterprise Cloud will give us access to the tools needed to take full advantage of those developments."

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T. 855.NUTANIX (855.688.2649) | F. 408.916.4039
info@nutanix.com | www.nutanix.com | @nutanix