

Washington County Government
Organization Improves
Performance, Saves Time and
Money by Upgrading to Nutanix

Yakima County Moves Up to Nutanix



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– Rick Olson,
Server Administrator,
Yakima County

CHALLENGE

Yakima County’s IT team provides virtual desktops for five county departments, including its Superior Court and District Court judges. “Our judges move around between their chambers and 12 different courtrooms,” explained Rick Olson, Yakima County server administrator. “They want consistency in their desktops, no matter what device they are using. With virtual desktops, they can get the same interface from any location and every device.”

The County’s IT environment consisted of four aging Dell servers and an EqualLogic SAN. “When I inherited the VDI environment three years ago, it was a management nightmare,” said Olson. “We had 12 different pools of desktops, each with its own master image. We also had thirty 1:1 VMs with unique configurations--they weren’t clones. Whenever ‘Patch Tuesday’ came around, we had to update all of those different images and recompose the pools. It was very time-consuming and complex process.”

Olson was convinced that VDI was a good fit for the County’s end users. “We just lacked two very critical components for making VDI successful,” he explained. “The first was a consistent way of dealing with all of the different applications, and second was having an infrastructure that could keep up with growth to ensure that the virtual desktops were always faster than traditional PCs.”

SOLUTION

Yakima County first heard about Nutanix through Unidesk. “We were tipped off to using Unidesk as a way of dealing with the application side of the equation,” explained Olson. “When we started looking at how to upgrade our VDI infrastructure, Unidesk recommended Nutanix. The idea of hyperconverged infrastructure made me a bit nervous at first, since we were going to introduce this relatively new architecture into in our environment. But the move to Nutanix was an excellent decision.”

Yakima County purchased its first Nutanix 1000-series system in March of 2016. “A Nutanix engineer did the set up and configuration. It was a very straightforward process, and I was able to ask him a lot of questions. It was a very enjoyable experience,” noted Olson.

RESULTS

Better Performance

Yakima County is running 80 virtual desktops on Nutanix, and plans on increasing that number to 120 desktops within six months. “Our goal is doubling in size in the next year or two. The powerful Nutanix solid-state drives make the virtual desktops run much faster,” said Olson.

Eliminating Day-to-Day Management

Yakima County had been using VMware vCenter to manage to manage its previous architecture. “Our VMware environment was running out of resources,” said Olson. “We had a few instances where VMs would completely fill up the SAN’s data store and cause an entire block to shut down. I was spending more than two hours every day just troubleshooting issues.”

The Nutanix environment is much easier to manage than the previous infrastructure. “What I love the most about Nutanix is that there is literally nothing we have to do on a daily basis with the system,” Olson shared. “I occasionally log into the Prism interface—just hoping that there’s something that I can troubleshoot—but there never is! It really is as easy as Nutanix claims it is.”

Excellent Support

“We’ve opened three cases since the Nutanix system were deployed, but they’ve all been preventative inquires,” said Olson. “I opened the first ticket when I was getting ready to upgrade ESXi from 5.5 to 6.0. I was very cautious about the one-click Nutanix upgrades, and I wanted to make sure everything was ready to go. That support ticket was just reaching out for guidance and planning. The engineer I worked with was very helpful and I received all of the information I needed the same day.”

NEXT STEPS

“In addition to serving our County, we also provide IT services for a local city,” explained Olson. “We’ll be replacing their entire Hyper-V setup with Nutanix AHV for all of their host server workloads. They currently have two Hyper-V hosts, so when we bring in the Nutanix cluster, they’ll have three nodes. They don’t want to purchase a third Windows datacenter license, so they decided to switch hypervisors. They will be able to save \$8000 in server licensing per year by moving to AHV.”



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COMPANY

Yakima County is the second-largest county in Washington State, serving over 250,000 residents.

INDUSTRY

Local Government

BUSINESS NEEDS

Aging Dell servers and EqualLogic systems were due for a refresh. Looking for a solution that was easier to manage and deploy.

SOLUTION

- › Nutanix 1000-series systems
- › VMware virtual desktops

BENEFITS

- › Improved performance of virtual desktops
- › Reduced datacenter footprint from 7u to 2u
- › Eliminated 2 hours per day in server and storage management