



DATA393 BUILDS BOTTOM LINE AND ADDS CLIENT OFFERINGS WITH COMPELLENT SAN



As a leading provider of managed IT infrastructure and hosting services for local and national organizations, Data393 relies on its storage systems as a revenue generation point, not simply a cost center. With more than 30,000 square feet of state-of-the-art raised floor space, 2 million watts of power, and 23 gigabits of Internet bandwidth, the Englewood,

Colorado-based Data393 facility is designed to serve customers ranging from retailers to social networking companies. Supporting the performance needs of such a wide range of customers demanded a scalable, easy-to-manage infrastructure, but the storage floor contained highly underutilized, shared, dedicated, and colocated servers with no centralized management or visibility across storage.

“We had difficulty in determining the amount of available capacity on the floor, and as a service provider, we must always be ready to meet a customer’s request for increased storage capacity or managed services,” says Steve Merkel, chief information officer of Data393. “Because we continually try to balance need with profit, we also wanted to supply our products and services in a very cost-effective way.”

To remain profitable and deliver 24x7 data access to its clientele, Data393 needed a highly reliable storage area network (SAN) that provided extensive flexibility and visibility to better manage its multi-faceted environment. “Our infrastructure forms the core of our product offering, and our customers trust us to protect their data. We needed to add better storage management and disaster recovery functionality to help reduce complexity, cost, and risk in the environment,” says Merkel. “After extensive evaluation of storage vendors big and small, we felt Compellent had the ideal combination of technical functionality, ease of management, and reliability for meeting our business needs and our bottom line.”

THIN PROVISIONING AND AUTOMATED TIERED STORAGE LOWER TCO

Because storage plays such a critical role in supporting Data393’s product portfolio, total cost of ownership is a high priority. In addition to up front acquisition costs, Merkel considers operating costs, cost of management, and cost of downtime key purchase decision drivers. When considering a SAN, Merkel consulted the Compellent TCO Tool to understand how features like Compellent’s Thin Provisioning and Automated Tiered Storage can increase storage utilization to reduce the cost of ownership over time.

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RESULTS REPORTED BY DATA393

- » Centralized storage on the Compellent Storage Center SAN for service provider corporate data and customer production shared, dedicated, and co-located servers
- » Established disaster recovery capabilities with Data Instant Replay and reduced 24-hour recovery time to moments
- » Created new set of customer products and services without adding IT resources to support those offerings
- » Saved up front costs for purchasing storage capacity by provisioning volumes
- » TCO analysis showed a savings over traditional storage vendors of nearly a million dollars over a four-year time period

OPERATING SYSTEMS

- » Windows

KEY APPLICATIONS

- » Microsoft Exchange Server 2003
- » Microsoft SQL Server™

EASY TO MANAGE SAN

For Compellent customers, ease of management enables greater flexibility and cost efficiency for even the most complex storage environments.

For Data393, simplifying a sprawling 30,000 square-foot production site with Compellent Storage Center and GUI-based management reduced operational costs, increased product offerings, and improved business continuity.

“It’s hard to remember life before the Compellent’s single management interface and all the functionality available. Today, we have centralized, easy-to-manage storage and I have overall insight on the data we manage, how it’s growing, and how best we can make use of it.”

“Compellent has provided us an easily managed environment and a lot of utility that we can, in turn, offer our end users for supporting their critical data.”

STEVE MERKEL
CIO
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Prior to acquiring the Compellent SAN, Merkel’s IT team could not readily quantify or allocate the amount of data they managed. Data storage could also not effectively be matched with performance requirements. Now, Merkel makes use of Automated Tiered Storage to automate the classification and migration of data to the preferred storage tier and Thin Provisioning to flexibly allocate resources.

“The ability to automatically move inactive data to lower-tier storage with Data Progression results in significant storage and administrative savings, which exceeded any other platform we evaluated—including traditional unified SAN and NAS vendors,” says Merkel. “Dynamic Capacity lets us manage provisioned volumes and physical storage independent of each other. This gives us the control to make capacity purchasing decisions based on actual usage instead of how much space has been exposed to end-users. That helps us improve performance, better forecast growth, and lower our total cost of ownership.”

CONTINUOUS SNAPSHOTS DELIVER BUSINESS CONTINUITY

To boost business continuity while ensuring cost efficiency, Data393 implemented Compellent’s Data Instant Replay™ software, which creates and stores space-efficient snapshots called Replays, without affecting performance. Data393 takes a high number of Replays to provide continuous data protection, and can recover volumes in minutes in the event of disruption. Continuous Snapshot technology keeps data protected and always available to support Data393’s dynamic customer base.

“Data Instant Replay allows us to snapshot particular applications, such as Microsoft Exchange and Microsoft SQL Server, and ensures that data remains consistent and can be recovered completely. In the past, a recovery issue could mean losing a day’s

worth of transactional data that required extensive IT staff hours to restore. The ability to take Replays and recover that data in moments is a great value-add to our organization,” says Merkel.

With these unique technologies, Data393 can extend their data storage and protection products and services to their end users. “Now we can offer our clients, many of which are small organizations, the ability to replicate data, improve recovery point and recovery time objectives, and reduce their operating costs—technology that would potentially be outside of their financial grasp.”

RELIABILITY AND EASE OF MANAGEMENT TRIM COST AND COMPLEXITY

Along with the new Compellent environment, Merkel was attracted to additional reliability through the proactive monitoring offered by Compellent Copilot Services, Compellent’s support team. “Compellent offers a second set of eyes on the storage environment. Compellent can potentially give us a call to let us know that a drive has failed even before we notice, even though we have a lot of monitoring functions in place. Copilot helps to ensure the availability of our storage architecture,” he says.

Since implementing the Compellent SAN, Data393 has created a nimble and reliable storage environment while reducing operational costs. Servers that once went underutilized are now managed through a common interface, allowing IT staff to quickly classify, assign, and manage data. And Data393 now has a greater set of products and services to offer its clients, while reducing the cost to provide those offerings.

Merkel explains, “Because I can scale the environment without having to add additional headcount to manage that environment, we see improved revenues and decreased operating costs—and that makes my CEO very happy, which in turn, makes me very happy.”