



The Computerworld Honors Program

Honoring those who use Information Technology to benefit society

Final Copy of Case Study

Status:

Laureate

Year:

2013

Organization Name:

HBF

Organization URL:

<http://www.hbf.com.au>

Project Name:

HBF Embraces Virtualized Storage Infrastructure

Please select the category in which you are submitting your entry

Emerging Technology

Please provide an overview of the nominated project. Describe the problem it was intended to solve, the technology or approach used, how it was innovative and any technical or other challenges that had to be overcome for successful implementation and adoption. (In 300 words or less.)

HBF is the largest private health insurer in Western Australia, supporting the health and well being of 900,000 Western Australians. The organization also sells general insurance offerings, including travel, car, life, and home and contents insurance. HBF has a distributed workforce comprising nearly 650 staff members across 19 service centers and its central office in Perth; all require access to the data and internal business applications located at the head office. For HBF, its previous enterprise storage platform was beginning to become fragmented and difficult to manage, as the components of that platform were quickly aging and hence, nearing end of life. Additionally, with a virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) project in the works that involved more than 650 desktops being brought into the data center, it was crucial the organization implement a solution that would deliver a seamless user experience when transitioning from physical to virtual desktops. To best meet both its current and future needs, while ultimately delivering better services and benefits to its end users, HBF looked into modernizing its aging infrastructure. It chose to leverage storage virtualization technology through the

introduction of Hitachi Virtual Storage Platform (VSP). By deploying Hitachi VSP, HBF was able to effectively consolidate its existing storage assets into a storage environment that is now more than 50 percent virtualized. Moreover, combined with Hitachi Command Suite management software, HBF is set for optimal infrastructure growth and has the flexibility and scalability it needs to efficiently store, access and move all of its current and growing data. The new solution also allowed the organization to successfully complete its VDI project, without experiencing any downtime; in turn, not affecting the user experience. In fact, users have indicated the performance of the new technology has been better than that provided by the previous physical desktops.

When was this project implemented or last updated? (Please specify month and year.) Has it incorporated new technologies and/or other innovations since its initial deployment? (In 300 words or less.)

HBF installed VSP on July 1, 2011.

Is implementation of the project complete? If no, please describe the project's phases and which phase the project is now in. (In 300 words or less.)

Yes. The project is completed.

Please provide at least one example of how the technology project has benefited a specific individual or organization. Feel free to include personal quotes from individuals who have directly benefited from the work. (In 300 words or less.)

By implementing Hitachi VSP, HBF was able to achieve the most crucial requirement of this project providing a seamless, yet improved experience for its end users. Quotes: "When introducing a technological change that affects so many end users, the user experience factor is absolutely crucial. The leading storage performance provided by the VSP has been an integral part of this successful deployment, giving us an extremely flexible and scalable virtual storage infrastructure." - Colin Rutherford, Senior Network Engineer (Infrastructure), HBF. HBF has also directly benefited from the flexibility and scalability virtualization technology offers, while also reducing their overall data center footprint and storage costs. Quotes: "To serve our performance requirements we are able to use our existing disk assets and dynamically tier across them. Rather than having all our data sit on Tier 1 disk on a single storage system, we can now tier this data via pools and automatically place the most frequently accessed data on the more efficient, faster disk, while the least accessible data is moved to the less expensive, slower disk. During periods of high performance demand, we can dynamically move our data up to a higher tier to get the best performance. This functionality was a key reason for us choosing the Hitachi solution, as it allows us to use far less physical disks. Our core VDI deployment is currently experiencing 3-4 millisecond response time when accessing writable disks, and the replicas are peaking at 1 millisecond per 650+ desktop read requests. Users have really embraced the technology as the performance has been better than that provided by the previous physical desktops. While providing us with a better user experience, it allows us to react quicker to growth demands and provision storage more effectively." - Colin Rutherford, Senior Network Engineer (Infrastructure), HBF.

A gold medal with a ribbon is visible on the left side of the page. The medal features a classical architectural design and the word "HONORS" is partially visible. On the right side, there is a large, light green laurel wreath graphic that spans the height of the page.

Would this project be considered an innovation, a best practice or other notable advancement that could be adopted by or tailored for other organizations and uses? If yes, please describe that here. (In 300 words or less.)

This project would be considered a notable advancement that could be adopted by or tailored for other organizations and uses. By embracing virtual storage systems, organizations of all sizes can easily keep up with the rapidly increasing growth of stored data, while also benefiting from increased power efficiency, reduced storage costs and an overall smaller data center footprint.

If there are any other details that the judges should know about this project, please note them here. (In 300 words or less.)

HBF is also looking to use the new VSP to further consolidate its SAN storage platform in line with growing its virtual-to-physical server ratio, which will reduce cooling and power costs and open up rack space in its data center. Having tight storage integration to support this will be crucial, as more reliance is placed on virtual infrastructure as opposed to physical infrastructure. HBF will also be looking to take advantage of Hitachi VSP to allow for a move toward private or public cloud storage offerings where possible, particularly with its development and testing environments. Additionally, the organization is looking to the cloud for data replication and disaster recovery capabilities, which can help improve business operations.