



Reduce Complexity

Improve Flexibility

Service Catalogue

Enable Automation

Pearson reduces storage cost with Tectrade and IBM

Challenge

Pearson Shared Services found that managing storage demands was expensive and slow, with spare capacity locked away in individual servers. Over-allocating storage as a tactic to avoid the costs of changing storage capacities was inefficient, and did not solve the basic problem of inflexibility.

Solution

Working with IBM Premier Business Partner Tectrade, Pearson Shared Services implemented an IBM System Storage DS8300 storage system, IBM System Storage SAN Volume Controller, and an IBM TotalStorage 3584 tape library.

Benefits

Using SAN Volume Controller, Pearson Shared Services can allocate, move and change storage capacities on the fly with no interruption to the business. With more granular control of storage, more efficient use of existing and new capacity contributes to reduced costs – lower than the maintenance costs of the previous system.

Pearson is a world leader in education, business information and consumer books, with international brands such as The Financial Times, Penguin Books and Pearson Education. With around 29,000 people and annual sales of more than £4.4 billion, Pearson is a fast-growing education and information services provider.

Within the group, Pearson Shared Services provides a complete range of IT systems and support for around 1,500 people in the Penguin and Education divisions in Harlow, UK. From email to advanced database applications and interactive Web sites, Pearson Shared Services is responsible for the cost-effective delivery of the enabling technology behind their business success.

Mike Howard, Server Team Leader, explains the challenges that growth has brought: "Managing storage capacity was becoming gradually more time-consuming and expensive. As well as general file serving and email allocations, business units would often find that their demands for storage would rise unexpectedly with new Web site successes or as new database-driven applications came on stream."

Infrastructure Objectives

Storage Consolidation

- Centralised Storage
- Enterprise Disk
- Storage Virtualisation
- Monitoring & Support

Key Deliverables

- Allocate, move and change storage on the fly
- Improved utilisation of storage assets
- Lower maintenance costs
- Improved flexibility to meet new business demands

"The business conclusion is that with IBM SVC, Pearson Shared Services is able to reduce its storage costs by making more efficient use of existing capacity and managing storage demands at lower costs."

Mike Howard, Server Team Leader, Pearson Shared Services

"The existing system was a mixture of SAN and direct attached storage, with spare capacity isolated on individual servers. Because it was difficult to add storage to an existing application, we tended to over-allocate capacity to try to reduce the number of changes required."

"When we did need to add capacity, we had no means of growing the assigned volumes, which meant that applications might end up with data spread over a handful of locations. To respond more effectively to the business needs, we started the search for a more cost-effective way to handle storage demands."

Searching for storage capacity

Working with an IBM Premier Business Partner, Tectrade, a specialist integrator of data and storage management solutions, Pearson Shared Services elected to deploy IBM System Storage SAN Volume Controller (SVC) virtualisation software, together with an IBM System Storage DS8300 storage system with 9TB of high-performance disk capacity.

Mike Howard comments, "The IBM SAN Volume Controller technology gives Pearson Shared Services the ability to manage storage in a completely new way. With SVC virtualising our storage capacity, we can move data on the fly to the most suitable device on the SAN, allocate and re-allocate storage volumes, expand allocations and much more. SVC enables us to assign storage capacities more accurately, knowing that we can make changes easily and cost-effectively if required."

"With IBM SVC, Pearson Shared Services is able to reduce its storage costs by making more efficient use of existing capacity and managing storage demands at lower costs."

New system, greater functionality, lower costs

When preparing the business case for the changeover, Tectrade was able to show that the collective operating costs of the new SVC and DS8000 combination would be lower than the maintenance costs of the former system.

Additionally, with limits on the available floorspace, expanding the former system was out of the question, which meant finding a high-capacity, high-density solution. With a small physical footprint and an architecture that can scale to 192TB, the DS8300 proved to be the best choice.

"The first time we moved data from one SAN device to another live, during production, was highly impressive," remarks Mike Howard. "SVC has always performed faultlessly, and very quickly you get used to the idea that you can rely on the IBM technology to do exactly what it says it can do."

Approximately 6TB on the DS8300 is virtualised and controlled by SVC, with the remaining 3TB dedicated to applications that do not normally require storage capacity changes. As the business needs grow, the remaining data may also be brought within the scope of the SVC to offer additional flexibility.

Taking advantage of integrated operations

Pearson Shared Services provides storage for data from diverse applications, financial systems, static and interactive Web sites, as well as graphics documents and images generated by Mac-based designers. The company had been using IBM Tivoli Storage Manager (TSM) for some time, and, working with Tectrade, chose to implement an IBM TotalStorage 3584 tape library with LTO2 media for backup and archiving requirements.

"Tectrade has provided invaluable advice on TSM, helping us exploit the automation and functionality of this extremely powerful product," says Mike Howard.

Enabling technology to help Pearson succeed

Now that the SVC, DS8000 and TSM solutions are in place, Mike Howard reports that Pearson Shared Services is in a better position to serve the business.

"With IBM SVC, we are able to respond more quickly to unpredictable demands for storage increases, and able to bring assets online and into production more rapidly. The IBM technologies have made a positive difference to our ability to manage projects, and helped us to reduce costs – for example by utilising existing storage capacity more effectively," says Mike Howard.

"The IBM System Storage solution gives us the flexibility to meet new business demands faster, at lower cost and with better data protection. Combine this with excellent service and skills from Tectrade, and Pearson Shared Services is ready for the next phase in storage growth."

Vendor Alliances on this project

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