

Customer: COM DEV International

Industry: Aerospace

Challenge: Mitigate risk with a transparent and extensible storage management solution

Solution:

- F5 ARX Intelligent File Virtualization for automated storage tiering
- NetApp FAS3210 Storage System with deduplication for disk Backup, File Storage and Vaulting
- Snapshot Technology for Backup Time Reduction

Results:

- Tiered storage model that enables efficient and transparent data storage and retrieval
- Shorter back up times
- Reduced business risk and enhanced business continuity

ABOUT COM DEV

COM DEV International is a global designer and manufacturer of space hardware, as well as a provider of space-based data services. The company is a world leader in the production of space-qualified passive microwave equipment, specialized electronics and optical subsystems. COM DEV has over 1,100 employees at facilities in Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States.

COM DEV manufactures advanced products and subsystems that are sold to major satellite builders for use in communications, space science, and remote sensing. Our technology is used on more than 800 spacecraft, including 80 percent of all commercial communications satellites ever launched.

COM DEV's 30-person Information Systems group supports the organization's infrastructure and application environment, and reporting into the company's finance group. The Information Systems organization, led by Director of IS Ron Service, is oriented around a three-year strategic plan, implemented annually through a 1-year operational plan. The team is structured into four groups; IT Services, running help desk and handling PC procurement and deployment; IT Projects, responsible for infrastructure services, network, storage and security; IT Developers, handling custom software development and IT Project Management.

THE SOLUTION

One area of particular focus for the team for 2011-2012 is the development of a data management strategy – a major IT funding initiative aimed at ensuring continued business performance through the implementation of a transparent, sustainable and future proof solution for data storage, back-up and recovery. Like many large enterprises, COM DEV and its IS group must contend with a rising tide of data, as file complexity and quantity grows. The nature of COM DEV's business – design and manufacturing of space hardware (i.e. satellites) further complicates the data storage challenge. Engineering drawings, program and test files, often constructed in CAD software, are exceptionally large in size and of high resolution. Also, the business's customers include military and government organizations from around the world, operating in regulated and highly process-oriented environments. Data related to these projects must be retained for a minimum of 20 years, and for security and government regulatory reasons, must be stored on site at COM DEV – ruling out third party, off site storage options.

Service's IT Projects team was already exploring virtualization, and recognizing they were rapidly outgrowing their current, centralized storage infrastructure put in motion a plan to proactively address this business challenge with a new, distributed model for

organizing and storing data. The company turned to FoxNet, a Waterloo-based IT service provider for the solution.

COM DEV and FoxNet have a long-standing partnership, first formed about 15 years ago. Services' IS team had established an excellent rapport and working relationship with FoxNet's staff – the teams had closely worked together on COM DEV's SAP implementation. Service was confident that FoxNet not only could solve the company's storage challenge, but also find a solution that was both creative and cost effective. We knew we needed to rethink our storage strategy, and we needed a longer term solution that required some out of the box thinking. FoxNet's solution design was exactly that – very creative. It called for a robust, tiered storage model that would allow us to be efficient and transparent, while allowing us to effectively manage our rapidly expanding data volumes," says Ron Service.

The solution designed and implemented by FoxNet consists of a multi-tiered storage management solution, using F5 and NetApp technologies. Data located within COM DEV's corporate location in Cambridge, Ontario includes Tier 1 current (active) business data, and Tier 2 archival data in a de-duplicated and virtualized format. The system will also help to improve data backup times, provide the scalability necessary for growth, and enable remote replication for Disaster Recovery as a future project phase.

It is a solution Ron Service and the IS team members are eager to implement over the coming months. He sings the praises of the FoxNet team's problem solving ability. "We needed out of the box thinking and we got it. They proposed a solution that goes beyond the products they sell, because their objective is to craft an infrastructure solution that makes sense for the customer. They are willing to invest the time in understanding our business – and that's the kind of partner I need on my team."