

IntelNet Creates On-Demand Computing Services with EqualLogic iSCSI SAN

Company:

Managed Hosting

Industry:

IT Services

Platform:

Microsoft® Windows®,
Red Hat Linux®

Challenges:

Managing DAS for numerous servers was costly and required a staff of experts

Upgrading storage capacity required customer downtime

Solution:

PS Series SAN consolidates storage, easing management and backup

Delivers market differentiation and new storage-based services

Enables utility computing model for flexibility

Headquartered in a 55,000-square-foot, high-security data center in Irvine, California, IntelNet Communications delivers managed hosting services to a worldwide customer base ranging from small and mid-size organizations to Fortune 500 firms. In business since 1994, IntelNet offers two primary services: On-Demand Managed Hosting and Colocation and Bandwidth for customer-owned equipment. On top of both these offerings is an optional layer of Managed Services, which include security, operations and administration, managed storage, monitoring and reporting, and backup and recovery.

On-Demand Managed Hosting ranges from simple Managed Servers with one or two processors to the design of complex computing environments, which typically include multiple servers, storage, networking, security, backup, load balancing, and more. Some customers outsource all of their IT operations to IntelNet, while others need only a platform for specific applications – either way customers can have complete systems up and running in just a few days.

DAS Causes Management Pain

The On-Demand Managed Hosting platform is a key service for IntelNet, offering customers Windows or Linux operating systems, dual Xeon™ to Quad Opteron processors, Cisco® networking, and VERITAS® backup. IntelNet had been configuring direct attached storage (DAS) for each Managed Server which required local data management for each server, a process both costly and time-consuming. Various disk drives and RAID configurations made deployment difficult and required numerous experts to custom-install each server. Once installed, each server required individualized maintenance and developed a personalized history. Solving problems required intimate knowledge of the server as well as the history. With such a requirement, IntelNet's service to customers was open to failure or outage.

As customers succeed and grow, they want to expand their data storage – but to do that with DAS requires taking systems down and rebuilding servers with larger disks. Because DAS can lock a customer into a finite amount of storage capacity, IntelNet was often in the position of purchasing high end servers just to provide the required disk capacity. Recalls Service Delivery Manager Jeff Stein, "Our goal is to give our customers the highest percentage of uptime possible, so we want to avoid taking them down to rebuild their systems and transfer data just to gain 50 percent more storage capacity. That impacts their business – we needed a better way."

Solution – Standardizing on EqualLogic SAN

These issues led IntelNet to search for a new storage solution as they standardized their On-Demand platform. Fibre Channel (FC) was dismissed from the picture because of its high cost and complexity. "We had the luxury of a test bed in our data center," remarks Stein. "Some of our customers own FC based SAN equipment; witnessing their pain directed us towards a more practical solution." IntelNet was excited about iSCSI and looked at storage solutions from several vendors. They selected the EqualLogic PS Series arrays for multiple reasons: superior hardware architecture, better scalability, automated functionality, and the integrated snapshot and remote replication software. "Some of the large vendors just use traditional FC SAN and add a front-end iSCSI machine," adds President and CEO Mark Towfiq. "Some small companies use Linux or Intel servers in front of JBOD. None of these were robust enough for our customers."

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- IntelNet Service Delivery Manager, Jeff Stein*

PS Arrays Deliver Market Differentiation and New Services

The PS Series SAN has added tremendous benefits to IntelNet, starting with marketplace differentiation. As the only managed hosting company using iSCSI, IntelNet now offers customers an easier to use, safer, more flexible, expandable, and affordable Managed Server platform than any other company. IntelNet can now deploy an image for new servers even more quickly than before, offering an innovative, flexible utility computing model. And now they can offer new SAN storage and replication services.

Standardizing on the PS Series storage arrays has enabled IntelNet to make all Managed Servers diskless. By concentrating data in one location, they simplify management and provide on-demand services to customers. "Our biggest headache was managing all the data locally," recalls Towfiq. "Now that we can leverage the PS Series SAN, those administrative nightmares are gone."

EqualLogic SAN Opens New Avenues

IntelNet plans to fully automate the Managed Server platform, eliminating manual tasks such as deploying partitions, provisioning volumes, and adding new servers. Instead, customers will be able to use the Web to modify their infrastructure as they choose. In summarizing the impact of the PS Series SAN on IntelNet, Towfiq says, "The biggest impact to our business is streamlining our operations, and that means cost savings. We can provide our customers with flexibility and services they have never had before."

Simplifying Networked Storage

EqualLogic PS Series solutions deliver the benefits of storage consolidation in an intelligent, enterprise-class storage system that is easy to install, manage and grow. Visit our web site at www.equallogic.com and let us show you what *simplifying networked storage* can mean for your business.

Compliments of:  **EQUALLOGIC**
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3835R East Thousand Oaks BLVD. #315
Westlake Village, CA 91365
Tel 877.230.2837 / Fax 805.435.2500 / www.ess-direct.com