Claranet Switches to Nutanix for Hosting Managed Services

Company Background

Claranet is a leading European web hosting and managed services provider headquartered in London, England. The company operates 20 datacenters in 6 European countries and has 700 employees, 110 of which work for Claranet France.

Inflexibility of Traditional SAN

When the SAN storage system at Claranet France reached end-of-life, Laurent Perriault, Director of Operations, began negotiating with the major storage vendor for an upgrade. The storage system was used for web and application hosting in a VMware virtualized environment. The vendor proposed a traditional SAN, but Claranet wanted something with fast, and flexible provisioning for serving many clients. "We were focused on flexibility and innovation. We were looking for a partner who would be able to understand our business needs," Perriault said.

Meanwhile, the Claranet team learned about Nutanix at VMworld in Barcelona and began exploring it in more detail with local representatives. "With Nutanix, there was a willingness to listen and propose an innovative solution," said Perriault.

Nutanix for Agile Hosting

Nutanix's converged storage and compute architecture makes it very easy to provision and reallocate resources, which is perfect for a dynamic cloud environment. It is SAN-free and expands capacity simply by adding nodes to the cluster – making it extremely simple to scale. The platform also offers very high IOPS performance, enabling it to support a large number of VMs simultaneously. Nutanix comes pre-loaded with a VMware hypervisor. Claranet's IT staff were already trained to use VMware, so there would be virtually no learning curve. The Claranet team was so impressed with the value propositions of the Nutanix technology, that they decided to purchase the Nutanix appliance even without any testing.

Simpler, Faster, Lower Cost

Claranet moved ahead quickly and purchased a 4-node Nutanix Complete Block. Installation went smoothly and took only a few hours. By the end of the second day, the system was fully operational and ready to migrate applications. "Going from a VMware environment to Nutanix is a natural evolution – very, very simple. There were no training costs involved," said Perriault.

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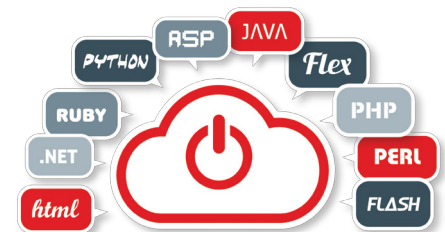> Director of Operations, Claranet France

Business Needs

A flexible, scalable, cost-competitive and easy to use new server and storage infrastructure for hosting managed services.

Solution

The Nutanix Virtual Computing Platform (NX-3450)

Benefits

- Converged, SAN-free architecture
- Virtualized platform preloaded with VMware
- Fast, flexible, easy provisioning of storage and compute resources
- High IOPS performance for supporting multiple VMs

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More than 140 VMs were migrated to the Nutanix system from 12 Dell servers being decommissioned, representing about 15% of Claranet France's business workload. The associated Fibre Channel SAN equipment was removed as well. All this even allowed Claranet to reduce their datacenter footprint. Nutanix is used for public cloud services, including web servers, ecommerce applications and MySQL databases.

"Nutanix has been very, very powerful in terms of IOPS. We are getting better IOPS at a lower price point," said Perriault. While the acquisition cost of Nutanix was notably less than traditional servers and SAN storage, Claranet expects additional savings from lower operating costs based on simplified administration, lower power consumption and smaller footprint. These TCO benefits are important in light of the competitive environment in Europe for managed services. "We have to be able to deliver a high-caliber virtual machine reliably and at a low cost," he said.

The simplicity of Nutanix allows IT staff at Claranet to focus more on customer service and less on IT administration. "We are not an infrastructure company. We are a service company, so we have to deal with our customers first on their issues. For infrastructure, we need to keep it simple and Nutanix can do that," added Perriault.

The architecture has allowed Claranet to invest in just what they needed and align it to their customer requirements. They provision resources according to a performance-per-VM ratio. As customer demands grow, they can add nodes incrementally and scale the solution. "This works very well for us. It allows us and our customers to benefit from a smaller set-up in the beginning, without losing the technological advantage, and grow seamlessly with the requirements ," he said.

Future Expansion

Claranet plans to gradually phase out its Dell servers as they reach end-of-life. At that point, all the workloads will be migrated to Nutanix. Claranet also recently acquired a managed services provider with 1,000 servers running KVM virtualization. Since Nutanix is hypervisor-agnostic and supports KVM as well as VMware, Claranet has plans to test these workloads on Nutanix and potentially migrate them as servers are upgraded.

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About Claranet
Claranet provides hosting, network and communications services to over 6,700 customers, ranging from small business to Fortune 500 companies. Visit www.claranet.com for more details.

About Nutanix
Nutanix provides datacenter infrastructure solutions that are hyper-efficient, massively scalable and elegantly simple. The award-winning Nutanix Virtual Computing Platform has disrupted the market by seamlessly and natively converging compute and storage in a single appliance. Headquartered in San Jose, Calif. with offices and authorized solution providers throughout the world, Nutanix is privately held and backed by top-tier VC firms. For more information, visit www.nutanix.com.

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