

Cape Town Software Experts Turn Up the Volume on Local Cloud With Nutanix

Improved Management, Scalability, Ease of Use and Performance Gains Core to Success of Codeforté Implementation

Software development and infrastructure management for online services is a tough business, which requires a robust infrastructure that is not just scalable but also forgiving, easy to manage, and won't break the bank. Because of these very reasons, Cape Town-based online software solutions company CodeForté turned to the Nutanix Hybrid Cloud Platform when looking to modernise and update its local private cloud environment.

CodeForté works with customers globally to conceptualise innovative software solutions to serve the demands of a dynamic online community. With customers worldwide, it develops everything from online gaming platforms to web services and manages the software development, infrastructure, and technical components of these solutions for customers as far afield as Canada and New Zealand.

THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

"While we are based in Cape Town, because of the nature of our business, we manage data centres across multiple locations such as Guernsey, Curaçao said Barend Mare, IT manager at CodeForté. "The challenge you face with such a distributed environment is that you can't always manage the hardware itself, and you must rely on whoever is in the onsite datacentre to do it on your behalf. You don't have the flexibility to scale as you need to, and the only way to get the consistency needed across all of your sites is to go the cloud route."

After initial investigations into the AWS public cloud, CodeForté unearthed that the costs were just too prohibitive and opted to follow a hybrid cloud model.

INDUSTRY

Technology

SOLUTION

Nutanix Hybrid Cloud Platform

- Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform
- Prism management plane
- VMware and AHV hypervisors

BENEFITS

- Lower management overheads due to less demand on IT resources
- Immediate scalability gains
- Ease-of-use and performance gains in 100% private cloud environment

This would see the business migrate some of its workloads into a VSAN environment, which worked for a while. But when its Cape Town offices infrastructure needed a complete facelift, it started looking at different options that would give it the same flexibility the cloud offers and the control it craved.

The ten servers in its Cape Town head office were running an ageing VMware virtualisation solution that couldn't support the functionality it needed. According to Mare, he called on long-time partner Pinnacle and its partner Softcat who asked if he had heard of Nutanix. After investigating the solution, scoping a system that would meet his requirements, and identifying that it met his budget and system's needs – he pulled the trigger.

SYSTEM DEPLOYMENT

After working with the local Nutanix team, we defined what I was looking for, and it was full steam ahead. The entire environment arrived here in one box with just four nodes, and the set-up was effortless. It was easier than anything I had worked on in the past. My VSAN environment would take a week to configure, whereas this was completely seamless, and I have been happy from the start,” said Mare.

The Nutanix environment is a central cog in CodeForté's private cloud environment, which houses the database dependant web servers of its client's online gaming environment and its day-to-day servers, front-facing web servers, email servers and game servers, to name a few. Predominantly a mirrored image of its live environments, the local datacentre also contains its active directory servers and hosts its Kubernetes microservices stack – currently managed through the Kubernetes management platform Rancher.

Today, the company runs four Nutanix NX 3060-G7 nodes coupled with its native AHV virtualisation software and has plans to extend its use of the Prism management software in the future.

“The level of service I received from Nutanix was simply amazing. From the sales discussions with the team to its systems engineers giving me access to their private labs to test and play with the solution before buying, it was incredible.”

HARD AND FAST BENEFITS

According to Mare, the CodeForté team got the Nutanix environment up in seconds, something it would not have enjoyed if it had merely upgraded its ageing VMware environment. The overall performance is as good as any of its global datacentres for a much lower cost.

“One of the biggest benefits to us has been how easy it is for anyone else in the technical team to learn how to use it. Personally, its ease of use is the best thing about Nutanix. This includes updating the environment and its overall manageability. If we were to update our VMware stack, it would take about four days to pull it over and work on it. It was a very manual process. With Nutanix, it is all automated, it is a click of a button, and it does it all itself,” added Mare.

On the technical side, Mare says if the team ever crashes the system, it literally takes a reboot to get it all up and running. Compared to its older environment that is highly dependent on internode communication between nodes, he says Nutanix is a fighter and is exceptionally strong in staying alive.

“Nutanix is very forgiving. Which again completes the ease-of-use cycle,” he said.

LOOKING AHEAD

Based on the success of the deployment and the cost savings of the investments made into Nutanix, Mare and his team are currently working on migrating its private cloud in Guernsey to a complete Nutanix environment. He says a Nutanix deployment will pay for itself in less than 3 years, after which it will enjoy cost savings of over 4000 pounds a month while taking advantage of better performance and more capacity.

"All IT departments sit with the same challenges. We all battle to scale environments easily and face an eternal problem with rolling out resources as we need them. Ultimately, managing environments takes time, which we don't always have. My whole team faced these issues daily, so the less time we must spend fixing, building, or managing something, the better. This is a problem I no longer face thanks to Nutanix," concluded Mare.



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