Redeemer gains flexible IT for new demands at lower cost

With Nutanix, Redeemer Lutheran College reduces IT costs and gains adaptable technology for new capabilities in a lockdown world

INDUSTRY
Education K-12

BENEFITS
- Reduces total cost of ownership compared with legacy solution

- Lowers licensing costs thanks to in-built disaster recovery capabilities

- Brings down management overheads by 60% with single-pane control

- Eliminates downtime across IT platform

- Enables strategic planning instead of constantly dealing with problems

- Achieves high rates of satisfaction among students, teachers, and parents

- Scales easily to support home-schooling during COVID-19 lockdown

BUSINESS BENEFIT

Redeemer Lutheran College in Australia needed to replace its ageing three-tier legacy infrastructure. There was a constant risk of issues impacting service delivery to students and teachers. However, rather than replacing the infrastructure like-for-like, the school felt it could do better—and migrated to a Nutanix. This turned the situation around, and suddenly IT became an enabler and satisfaction rates rose. Downtime was eliminated and IT capacity and performance were in place, so that when COVID-19 struck and a lockdown ensued, the school had what it needed to instantly respond. What's more, there were immediate savings through a reduced cost of ownership, lower licensing costs and 60 percent greater IT efficiency.

"By migrating to Nutanix, we can start to leverage the potential of IT to enhance educational outcomes for students, giving them tools they need to be at their best while still staying on the right side of our budget."

– Andrew Kemp, IT Manager, Redeemer Lutheran College

SOLUTIONS
- Nutanix Cloud Platform

- Nutanix AHV

- Nutanix Prism management Software

NUTANIX

APPLICATIONS

- Schoolbox learning management system
- Synergetic management system
- Microsoft SQL Server and MySQL database engines
- Active Directory
- DHCP
- DNS
- CCTV system

CHALLENGE

Redeemer Lutheran College (Redeemer) is located on the southern outskirts of Brisbane in Queensland, Australia. A co-education school, it serves children from Prep to Year 12. Redeemer's Strategic Plan describes the role of the school in helping meet the educational needs of the local community, allowing students to develop to their full potential. The school understands that technology plays an important role in realizing that potential and has a bring-your-own-device (BYOD) policy to promote the use of IT for academic excellence.

To support students and teachers, the school created an online education hub, called My Redeemer, to share and access resources securely. Using it, the school could easily extend learning beyond classrooms to support academic progress. The challenge, however, was the legacy infrastructure underpinning the learning management system (LMS), as well as administrative systems across the school. Andrew Kemp, IT manager at Redeemer explains, "Our legacy three-tier infrastructure was ageing and coming to the end of its working life. There was a constant risk of outages impacting service delivery. There was the possibility of teachers losing time at the start of lessons because of technical problems."

Rather than just upgrading the stack, Redeemer thought more closely about what the best solution might be. "IT nowadays needs to be increasingly adaptable," says Kemp, "and it wasn't obvious that maintaining the "three-tier status quo" was the right way to go. Cost is also a key consideration, and we had five people managing the infrastructure. The question was, how do we make our IT better to support continued improvement at lower cost?"

SOLUTION

ASI Solutions, which provides the school with managed IT services, proposed a Nutanix hyperconverged infrastructure (HCI). Mitchell Gemmell, Business Development Manager at ASI Solutions says, "Nutanix is already helping many K-12 schools overcome their IT challenges, and we saw Redeemer as the perfect candidate for a Nutanix HCI."

Kemp adds, "We could easily see that Nutanix addressed our need to deliver a better level of IT service, more cost effectively. In addition, it made our IT more adaptable, so we could meet new requirements by the school."

Working with ASI Solutions, Redeemer deployed three Nutanix nodes and migrated across both educational and administrative systems from the legacy infrastructure. The systems powered by Nutanix include Schoolbox, the LMS that sits behind My Redeemer, and Synergetic, a school management system. Both systems use a mix of Microsoft SQL Server and MySQL database engines. "We've also got multiple Active Directories on Nutanix, our DHCP [dynamic host

configuration protocol] and DNS [domain name system] and a reverse proxy server," says Kemp. "We added a fourth Nutanix node and migrated our CCTV system across too. Everything is on there now. It's great."

CUSTOMER OUTCOME

Reduces total cost of ownership compared with legacy solution
By moving from a three-tier solution to a Nutanix HCI, Redeemer has gained savings from powering, cooling, and consolidation in the datacenter. In addition, the school has overturned the concept of upfront provisioning in favor of a pay-as-you-go private cloud model where it buys additional Nutanix performance when required. Importantly, Redeemer has been able to reduce licensing costs—migrating from VMware to Nutanix AHV and using Nutanix's in-built data protection instead of third-party software.

Says Kemp, "IT budgets in the K-12 sector have never been under so much pressure. With Nutanix, Redeemer can meet this requirement to reduce cost while still developing our IT services to support students the best we can."

Brings down management overheads by 60% with single-pane control
Since moving to Nutanix, the school has reduced the IT management burden significantly, helping IT align with other school departments seeking to control costs. "We've cut back the resource for administering IT by around 60 percent by moving from a three-tier infrastructure to a Nutanix HCI," says Kemp.

Key to reducing the management burden has been Nutanix Prism, a single-pane management solution. "The simplicity of the Prism dashboard for AHV, for example, is great," says Kemp. "If you want to check out how something is performing, you go straight into Prism. It couldn't be easier. Everything is at your fingertips. Spinning up servers is so simple too."

He continues, "For example, the LMS provider told us to prepare a new server for them to work on while they were doing an upgrade. We did what was asked and simply spun up another server. It took no longer than 20 minutes, which helped us avoid any disruption on that day."

Eliminates downtime across IT platform, enabling new projects
The school has ensured high availability across the broad mix of workloads running on Nutanix. The IT help desk is no longer receiving calls from members of staff, reporting problems with accessing applications and data, or poor connectivity. "Everyone is saying that the IT has never been so good," recounts Kemp. "It's such a great feeling that we're actually delivering on how technology can help in classrooms. On top of this, we have more time to think through how we can take our IT to the next level."

He goes on, "A teacher asked for a space for students to build a website. The finished website was to enable students to build ties with local businesses. We were like; great, let's make this happen! And we did. It was an incredible learning experience for the students and really satisfying for us as well."

Achieves high rates of satisfaction while tackling COVID-19
With Nutanix in place, everyone at the school is experiencing IT as an enabler. What's more, the adaptability of the Nutanix HCI means the school can react to new circumstances—such as COVID-19 and a local lockdown—while minimizing disruption to teachers and students. "We enabled remote connectivity to our LMS some time ago to allow students and teachers to access content from home. However, the system was

set up to support a maximum of 400 concurrent connections, well above the average at that time," says Kemp. "With COVID-19, the entire 1,200 student body could potentially be connecting at the same time, so Schoolbox advised us on how much to scale the infrastructure to handle the increase. We did this easily thanks to Nutanix, and even received messages from parents saying how happy they were with the way their children could transition to remote learning."

NEXT STEPS

The school has the spare capacity to respond quickly to additional IT requirements as and when they arise. Says Kemp, "We have the reliability and redundancy in place that gives me the peace of mind that we can meet the school's needs today and tomorrow."

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