

Nutanix Has It All – Vitacost.com Switches to Nutanix for VDI

Company Background

[Vitacost.com, Inc.](http://Vitacost.com) is a leading online retailer of more than 45,000 healthy living products, including dietary supplements, natural personal care products, sports nutrition and health foods. The company carries over 2,500 third-party brands as well as its own line of proprietary products. The company has nearly 800 employees and supports its operations with a customer service center, two distribution centers, and a powerful website and backend infrastructure. Vitacost.com is a true leader in customer satisfaction and recently ranked #2 among the top 100 US websites during the 2013 holiday season, according to the ForeSee Experience Index (FXI): 2013 US Retail Edition.

VDI System Resources Maxed Out

The original VDI system at Vitacost.com ran on legacy Dell servers and EMC SAN storage which were shared with other datacenter applications. The virtual desktops were slow and unresponsive, applications took a very long time to load, and users complained frequently about performance and speed. For administrators, the task of recomposing images took all night. System resources were maxed and no more desktops could be added. “We couldn’t squeeze another desktop or even give the users more storage space,” said Rudy Dellafiore, Senior Director of IT Operations at Vitacost.com. “We had to do something quickly to fix this issue.”

The IT staff considered rack servers with Fusion-io PCIe flash storage cards and SAN storage on the backend, but the cost was high and they wanted dedicated infrastructure for VDI so it would not interfere with other datacenter applications. “For Vitacost, the cost of keeping the legacy infrastructure for VDI didn’t make sense. I wanted to move away from a legacy infrastructure and find an easy-to-use, high-performance, scalable device with the ability to add disaster recovery (DR) in the future, without dumping more money into legacy servers and SANs,” said Dellafiore.

Nutanix Has It All

The Nutanix Virtual Computing Platform fit their requirements perfectly. The Nutanix converged compute and storage architecture is easy to manage and easily expands by adding nodes to the cluster. The appliance comes pre-loaded with a VMware hypervisor and ready to run Horizon View. It delivers exceptionally high IOPS that satisfy even the workload spikes of VDI during boot storms, anti-virus scans, etc. Nutanix offers DR with native per-VM replication. A smaller appliance can be set up as a failover target if Vitacost.com decides to add DR capability in the future. Furthermore, the capital cost of Nutanix was about 30% less than the legacy infrastructure and saved the company about \$30,000.

The customer service department, which is a critical function for a customer-oriented company like Vitacost.com, is the primary user of the virtual desktop. Dellafiore added, “I needed something that was going to perform for them with lightning speeds. That’s another reason we chose Nutanix. We liked the technology behind it – flash cache cards, SSDs, automated data tiering. When we saw the VDI demo, the Nutanix representative spun up 30 or 40 desktops in a couple of minutes. It was really impressive to see the technology in action.”



“It’s a cutting-edge technology. This is where datacenter infrastructure is going or at least where I perceive it going, bringing storage up to the compute layer gives increased performance and reduced cost. I think Nutanix has a top-notch team with a great vision for the future of the converged datacenter.”

– Rudy Dellafiore
Senior Director of IT Operations, Vitacost.com



Industry

Online Retailer

Business Needs

Dedicated server and storage platform for VDI that is very scalable, easy to support, saves time on administration and delivers high IOPS performance.

Solution

The Nutanix Virtual Computing Platform (4-node NX-3000 Series) with VMware Horizon View

Benefits

- Saved \$30,000 in CAPEX compared to legacy infrastructure
- 94% reduction in datacenter rack space requirement
- 90% faster image recomposes
- 100% uptime
- Ease of management
- Infrastructure ready to support disaster recovery
- Single point of support for compute and storage



NUTANIX
www.nutanix.com

Fast, Responsive, Easy-to-Manage Virtual Desktops

The Vitacost team installed a 4-node Nutanix NX-3000 Series appliance, which took only an hour or two. The installation process was quick and simple. Today about 140 virtual desktops are running on Nutanix. They run heavy workloads with users accessing applications, including ERP systems, email, web and telephony through VDI.

“Desktops are very responsive on Nutanix and the performance is significantly faster. Users are pleased and no longer complain about VDI performance. We have near zero disk latency. Users can work without impacting each other, even when rebooting or running heavy workloads,” said Dellafiore.

For administrators, the time taken to recompose the VDI environment has been cut down exponentially – recomposes take only an hour instead of all night – a 90% improvement. Uptime on Nutanix has been 100%. “We’ve never had downtime on Nutanix, even during maintenance tasks.” Nutanix is also more compact, consuming only 2U compared to 36U for equivalent traditional servers and SAN.

The simplicity of managing the Nutanix compute and storage has reduced the workload for the IT staff. “The single pane of glass for administration tasks on the back end makes life very easy for the IT team,” said Dellafiore. “Most of our administrative duties are actually done in VMware. We rarely go into the Nutanix GUI.” Commenting on the GUI, Dellafiore added, “It is very easy to use, very simplistic. All the information is right there in a single pane of glass. Upgrades are pretty much painless when they are needed.”

The Nutanix support team has been very responsive and knowledgeable. The proactive call-home feature notifies support of any issues and expedites the diagnosis and resolution process. According to Dellafiore, having a single throat to choke for compute and storage is convenient, and avoids the hassle and finger-pointing of working with multiple vendors.

As for the customer service representatives who use the desktops, productivity has dramatically improved with the faster and more responsive virtual desktops. “Prior to Nutanix, we would get multiple calls every day complaining about the end-user experience and now we rarely receive a complaint.” Representatives are able to take more calls and provide much better service to Vitacost.com’s customers.

Expansion a Breeze

With plans to grow the VDI infrastructure, the IT team is ready to scale. “If we want to expand the Nutanix platform for additional users, we can rapidly deploy because of the ease of deployment and guarantee VDI performance to the end user,” Dellafiore said. By contrast, the legacy servers and SAN would have required additional chassis, servers, storage and network equipment.

After the great experience with VDI, the Vitacost team is now planning to look at the Nutanix Virtual Computing Platform for deploying new applications including SQL and running other future production workloads.

Summing up his thoughts on Nutanix, Dellafiore said, “It’s a cutting-edge technology. This is where datacenter infrastructure is going or at least where I perceive it going, bringing storage up to the compute layer gives increased performance and reduced cost. I think Nutanix has a top-notch team with a great vision for the future of the converged datacenter.”

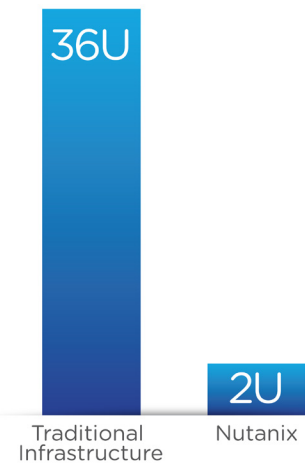
About Nutanix

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.

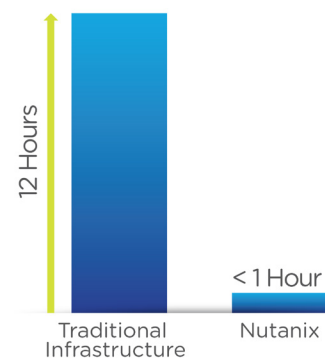
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Vitacost.com

Datacenter Rack Space Requirement



Time Taken to Recompose VDI Environment



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