

Nikkei Inc. Adopts Nutanix and Revamps Its Core System that Supports Newspaper Production

The development of a highly available and scalable IT infrastructure platform enables stable operations and improves operational management efficiency

INDUSTRY

Printing/Publishing

CHALLENGES

- Operational load issues in a three-tier architecture
- Lack of availability and scalability of the core system
- Increasing complexity of designing and operations
- Operational load for backup operation
- Long lead time for procurement

SOLUTIONS

Nutanix Cloud Platform

- Nutanix AOS
- Nutanix Prism

APPLICATIONS

Newspaper Production Systems

- Submission System
- Typesetting System
- Printing Data Transmission System, etc.

Core Business Systems

- Systems for Human Resources
- Systems for General Affairs
- Accounting Systems, etc.

BENEFITS

- Achieved stable operations of newspaper production/core operations systems
- Improved efficiency of backup operations
- Reduced operational loads through semi-automated management
- Scalability to meet new resource demands



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– Hiroyuki Ichiki, Manager of Information Technologies Bureau at Nikkei Inc.



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Company Overview

Nikkei Inc. (henceforth Nikkei) has been providing valuable information to business professionals since 1876, for more than 140 years. Its leading medium, The Nikkei, currently has a circulation of approximately 1.99 million*. The Nikkei Online Edition was launched in March 2010. The number of digital subscriptions, which includes the number accounted for by paying subscribers to the Nikkei Online Edition currently is 810,000, with the total number of paid and free members exceeding 5 million.

*Announced in January, 2021

CHALLENGES

Nikkei had been operating its core system, NEO, on a private cloud built in the company's own data center. NEO comprises systems for newspaper production, enabling the submission of manuscripts, editing and layout and print data transmission. It also includes systems for human resources, general affairs, and accounting. However, they were not satisfied with its operation management and scalability of its cloud platform.

Hiroyuki Ichiki, Manager of Information Technologies Bureau at Nikkei, says: "Because we initially had a three-tier architecture composed of separate servers, storage, and networks, we had to design and work on the servers and storage individually every time we expanded, which required time and costs. Manual backups and resource procurement were also time-consuming, and it was not an ideal system environment or operation management setup."

SOLUTION

To revamp NEO, Nikkei looked into the adoption of a hyper-converged infrastructure (HCI), which has flexibility and scalability. When selecting Nutanix as the virtual platform for NEO, the company recognized its track record as a virtual desktop (VDI) infrastructure and the operability of Nutanix Prism. "First, we wanted to make effective use of existing assets—our own data centers," says Mr Ichiki. "It was also important to revamp the infrastructure without changing the application layer, to ensure a smooth switchover. Nutanix was attractive to us because it allows us to quickly scale resources as needed, without having to change software over the long term."

The Nutanix-based NEO+ began operations in 2019 with minimum nodes in Nikkei's Windows-based cluster and the Linux-based cluster. In order to avoid waste in costs, they have gradually increased the number of nodes by taking advantage of Nutanix, and the platform officially started its operations in February 2021.

For stable operations, Nikkei used Nutanix's replication factor function to ensure data redundancy and availability. As a business continuity plan (BCP) measure, Nikkei have connected their data centers in East and West Japan via dedicated lines, and the backup software is used to synchronize data in almost real-time.

OUTCOME

Since migrating to NEO+, Masaaki Sera, Deputy Manager of Information Technologies Bureau at Nikkei says that "backup operations can be performed in a matter of days using the snapshot feature, when it used to take weeks of manual operations."

They have also been able to semi-automate management tasks such as virtual machine provisioning, which has reduced the management load. "One of the merits of using Nutanix is its rich application programming interface, which makes it easy to automate. It has reduced workloads, such as paying out resources," says Mr Sera.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a rapid increase in remote work and the need for new resources. Faced with this challenge, Nikkei was able to quickly expand the nodes with a little configuration work.

NEXT STEPS

Nikkei's aims are to use different products and services as needed, whether they are on a private or public cloud, as well as designing and operating an infrastructure that is not locked into a specific technology or environment.

"Nutanix's openness in not having to use specific clouds or hardware is in line with our company's philosophy of designing infrastructure with a high degree of freedom," notes Mr Ichiki. "We are hoping to accumulate know-how and technology that will allow us to speedily design and build in-house, using Nutanix solutions."



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