

It was “Game On” for Vodacom rAge Expo LAN Gamers with Nutanix

Largest LAN gaming festival in Southern Africa ensures gamers are connected, machines are performing and that there were no missed headshots with Nutanix

Southern Africa’s biggest annual gaming, computer, technology and geek culture exhibition and event has for the second year running completely transformed its LAN. Benefiting from a full sponsorship from Nutanix, the Vodacom rAge Expo LAN is now 100% virtualized, providing its gamers a flawless experience for 69 solid hours of gaming over the three-day long event.

Already in its 17th year, rAge is the LAN Bring Your Own Console (BYOC) gaming event of the year and gamers from across the country descend on the TicketPro Dome in Johannesburg to test their mettle. Traditionally the event has run its LAN gaming environment over a legacy virtualized infrastructure, and last year while Nutanix was used at the event, the system had not 100% been moved to a hyperconverged environment.

“We took a big leap this year with Nutanix, but they say fortune favours the brave, and the kit proved to be critical to the success of the rAge LAN,” states Eric Blaschzok, LAN Project Manager at rAge Expo. “We used the Nutanix tools to migrate our ready-to-go VMs from our existing VMware system with little to no effort at all, and all of the existing VMs ran on AHV perfectly from the word go.”

THE SOLUTION AND CHALLENGES

According to Blaschzok, creating the VMs from scratch was a “breeze”, a straightforward and simple process from just uploading an ISO, to creating the new VLANS for the deployment of the new LAN environment.

COMPANY

The Vodacom rAge expo is Southern Africa’s biggest gaming, tech and geek culture exhibition and is already in its 17th year.

INDUSTRY

Entertainment

BUSINESS NEEDS

Running the largest Bring Your Own Console (BYOC) gaming LAN, the company wanted to explore the benefits of a hyperconverged infrastructure as opposed to a legacy environment, to improve gaming performance and ensure uptime for gamers.

SOLUTION

- Nutanix Enterprise Cloud
- Prism management plane
- AHV hypervisor

BENEFITS

- Zero outages over the three of the expo
- 71.9 TB served to gamers with estimated peak transfer rates of 8 Gbps
- A total of 18.28 TB of logical SSD space used

While the migration was not completely without its challenges, Blaschok says the primary issues arose when creating the NIC team on the LAN block. But the rAge team was able to resolve this fairly quickly, identifying that the actual problems resided on the core switch environment, and not on the Nutanix equipment. "Either way, when we consider all of the hosts on Nutanix become isolated, it was able to recover and re-converge very quickly," he adds.

The full range of technology sponsors for the event included Nutanix, MWEB, Aruba and My Sky Networks, all of whom had to pool resources to ensure the rAge team had the best of the best.

THE RESULT

The figures say it all and the sheer volume of gamers, the hours played, and the data sent across the LAN was staggering.

"We had zero outages related to the hardware or the Nutanix cluster over the full weekend, and the small network blips we experienced at the event were as a result of issues upstream of us. To create some perspective, we saw 519 unique Steam games played, and our Steam gamers enjoyed 9726 hours 48 minutes and 16 seconds. Based on the fact that there are 24 hours in a day, this equates to 405.25 days of straight gaming over just a three day period. Notably, this was only the Steam games, as it is the only gaming client that gives us the granular visibility of hours played per endpoint," adds Matthew Brent, System Engineer, rAge Expo.

With a massive crew of gamers Furthermore, the rAge team was able to serve 71.9 TB to the gamers, with estimated peak transfer rates of 8 Gbps and made use of approximately 18.28 TB of logical SSD space, with plans to increase this next year. Outside of the Steam only stats, the official numbers from rAge showed that collectively, 3,252 Counter Strike: Global Offensive games were played for 2,925 hours, 1,838 DOTA games were played for a total of 2,281 hours and 645 Playerunknown's Battleground games were played for 522 hours over the weekend.

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"Using Nutanix was an absolute breeze, and there is no doubt we will be using it again next year. Even when we saw some possible performance issues with the way that the servers were deployed on the actual cluster, we never experienced them (performance issues). In fact, after discussions with the Nutanix team onsite during the event, it has just helped me create a plan with regards to how we can split up the systems more next year.

So looking ahead to 2020 I want to be able to make better use of the Nutanix cluster deployment and not just use one or two hosts with big VMs," ends Blaschok.



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