McNamee, Lochner, Titus & Williams, P.C.

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

McNamee, Lochner, Titus & Williams
Storage Virtualization Software

Law Firm picks Microsoft® Windows Server® 2008 R2 with Hyper-V™ and DataCore™ Storage Virtualization for their Ability to Successfully Power Virtual Infrastructures

Overview

Background:
Based in Albany, New York, McNamee, Lochner, Titus & Williams is one of the Capital Region's oldest and largest law firms with multiple practice areas ranging from civil litigation to business transactions, reflecting a diverse clientele. For more, visit www.mltw.com

Previous Environment:
HP MSA 1000 clustered SAN.

Problem:
Needed a solution to address quickly growing storage needs without being locked into specific hardware.

Solution:
DataCore SANmelody virtual SAN deployed in conjunction with a clustered Hyper-V system.

Hardware Independence – Optimized by Virtualization

McNamee/Lochner had reached a point where the firm needed to increase its storage capacity. "Our storage was growing at a much faster rate than it had in the past," noted Jack Weisberg, IT director, McNamee, Lochner, Titus and Williams. "Moreover, the hardware that we were running on was out of warranty – so we were looking to get something new." Since 2004, the firm had been using a clustered SAN – an HP MSA 1000. Initially, a key requirement in a new system was something that had a solid approach to redundancy, as well as one that offered ease of expansion.

Whereas LeftHand Networks was an early front-runner, since it seemed a logical replacement to the MSA SAN, P&J Computers presented DataCore SANmelody to the firm as well. "In comparing both systems, we found both to be strong in terms of their capability of avoiding single points of failure," noted Weisberg. "But I really like not being tied to specific hardware – something DataCore enables. It was very important for us not to get locked into older platforms, when there is newer hardware available on the market that we could use with DataCore SANmelody."

With DataCore, P&J was able to use their preferred hardware of choice – in this case, enterprise-class 6 GB SAS drives. Knowles praised the ability of DataCore to enable administrators to add a couple of 10 Gb NICs in these servers for a very low cost as "tremendous."

DataCore™ SOFTWARE

"The DataCore-Hyper-V combination really fit our needs. I certainly like the virtual environment. I also really like having redundant storage. And having seamless failover was key for us as well."

- Jack Weisberg, IT director, McNamee, Lochner, Titus and Williams

P&J Computers – Trusted Solution Providers

DataCore partner P&J Computers, Inc., a data storage and IT service provider, sees the DataCore and Microsoft Hyper-V combination to be not only a good fit – but a great opportunity for both resellers and users alike. It also showcases P&J Computers' ability to be one of the first to implement the latest Windows Server 2008 R2 technology, which was released publicly in October 2009.

P&J Computers is engaged in several accounts where they are deploying DataCore storage virtualization, Windows Server 2008 and Hyper-V in joint configurations. What the partner saw in the new R2 release of Windows Server 2008 release was an opportunity for McNamee/Lochner to take some of the complexity out of its existing environment. What was imperative to making this possible was the release of Windows Server 2008 R2 and the new live migration functionality in Hyper-V.

A Virtual Infrastructure – Combining Servers and Storage to Support Mission-Critical Applications

DataCore SANmelody is now deployed in conjunction with a clustered Hyper-V system. Moreover, with a Windows Server 2008 R2 Hyper-V cluster, McNamee/Lochner now has the ability to "live migrate" the virtual machines (VMs). Both cluster nodes have read/write access to the disk, at the same time. Running on this infrastructure, there are four (4) VMs that can "live migrate" between the two hosts. Currently, the second node at McNamee/Lochner is located onsite, albeit in a separate rack. "What this DataCore-Hyper-V set-up does is to minimize or even eliminate downtime, when we need to make system changes," noted Weisberg. "This system is working very nicely. Plus, everything is redundant. We have redundant storage with DataCore. And we have redundancy built into the VM system."

The multi-Terabyte data pool at McNamee/Lochner is currently supporting 130 users. A third node – running Microsoft Data Protection Manager – is deployed for back-up. The applications that McNamee/Lochner uses run on HP DL 380 G6s (dual, quad core Nahalim processors). The 24 GB of memory can be expanded to 144 GB, if need be. "All the bread and butter applications for running McNamee/Lochner's business will run on this by year-end," noted Knowles.

The next phase of the migration will entail moving what was clustered on Windows 2003 on the old SAN into the virtual environment as well. Space is allocated and P&J Computers just needs to schedule a date to do the cut-over.

Value Protection That Meets Business Objectives

In embracing a virtualized approach, McNamee/Lochner is looking three or four years down the road. Therefore DataCore's "Carry Forward Value Protection Program" – which translates to "Buy – Upgrade – And only pay the difference" – is for McNamee/Lochner a real insurance policy, whereby they might look at new hardware and still keep the same software. "I love this policy that DataCore offers," commented Weisberg. "I am entitled to upgrade the hardware I use with DataCore storage virtualization software. Rather than be forced to scrap my MSA 1000 SAN when it is at its end-of-life, with DataCore I can just buy new hardware and I can continue to use the software – on any new environment I choose. I really think this is awesome."

"We were looking for something redundant, reliable, flexible and expandable," summarized Weisberg. "The DataCore-Hyper-V combination really fit our needs. I certainly like the virtual environment. I also really like having redundant storage. And having seamless failover was key for us as well."

For more information on storage virtualization, please visit:
www.datacore.com

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