OneBlox Improves Storage Efficiency for HLB

Hooper, Lundy, and Bookman scales OneBlox for Veeam, litigation support, and disaster recovery

Introduction

Storage efficiency is a key value for any modern infrastructure and there are many aspects to consider: data footprint reduction, data protection schemes, replication, architecture, provisioning, and ease of use, to name a few. Each of these contribute to the overall efficiency of the entire environment, including minimizing costs and providing better service to the users.

Hooper, Lundy, and Bookman P.C. (HLB), with offices in California and Washington D.C., is the largest law firm in the country dedicated solely to the representation of health care providers and suppliers. Having started in 1987, it is one of the most awarded and focused team of lawyers in this sector. As a result, HLB attorneys and government relations specialists represent providers and suppliers in all aspects of their business and regulatory transactions, litigation, arbitration and dispute resolution needs, as well as advocacy and public policy. The firm has represented clients in many of the landmark appellate cases that have shaped health care law over the past two decades.

When Greg Williams, CIO, an IT professional with 30 years of experience in other similar companies, joined the firm he immediately started working to improve the efficiency of HLB's IT infrastructure. Server virtualization was the first step. He also knew that traditional backup systems were inadequate to support the firm's needs from both the software and hardware point of view. Consequently, he brought in Veeam for the backup platform and set his sights on selecting a disk-based target for Veeam. Deduplication was a critical requirement here.

StorageCraft, with its object-based storage architecture, provides a multiple-data-copy protection mechanism with inline deduplication, file sharing, and remote replication capabilities along with a competitive price. In fact, unlike other point solutions in the market, StorageCraft can efficiently serve backup and traditional file services and at the same time.

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"I needed a scaleable deduplication disk-based solution to seamlessly integrate with Veeam. OneBlox did that and is a solution that will easily scale and be dynamic as my business requirements change."

Greg Williams, CTO,
Hooper, Lundy, & Bookman

Business Challenges

- Improve backup/recovery and disaster recovery infrastructure
- Support increasingly dynamic and unpredictable storage growth

Business Challenges

When examining the backup problem, the first challenge Greg experienced was backup performance. He needed to speed up restores with a disk-to-disk solution because tapes were no longer acceptable to cope with user requests. It failed to meet the requirements of flexibility, granularity, and speed of information retrieval. Another challenge he faced was the massive and ever increasing amounts of data for its litigation cases the firm was storing. This data, potentially, has a very long retention with an unpredictable growth rate over time. Furthermore, it must be incorporated into the firm's disaster recovery plans and remote replication. Consequently, Greg had to efficiently remotely replicate an uncertain amount of information from Los Angeles to San Francisco.

> "When I hear about object storage, I think about Amazon S3 or Petabytes of onpremises storage. I do none of that. It doesn't help my law firm. StorageCraft gives me all the benefits of object storage, but integrates with my applications today and the ones that matter to my law firm."
>
> *Greg Williams, CTO,*
> *Hooper, Lundy, & Bookman*

For both litigation support and backup/recovery, random access performance was not a fundamental requirement and the number of users is relatively small. Unlike random access performance, data protection was a fundamental requirement for HLB. With the ever-increasing capacity of disk drives, legacy RAID is no longer effective at protecting data when multiple drive failures occur over a short period of time.

According to the requests coming from the firm's management in terms of data retention policies or storage capacity requirements, the storage infrastructure can grow very quickly and unpredictably at any given point in time. With a lean IT organization, the team must avoid forklift upgrades or any other costly activity that can cause service disruptions or incur storage resource over-provisioning. Consequently, legacy scale-up storage solutions fail to satisfy these criteria as it results in a significant capital expenditure up front in an attempt to plan for 36 months of unpredictable capacity growth and retention requirements.

The Solution

HLB selected StorageCraft over Data Domain and Exagrid for its backup needs because of its next generation architecture, overall efficiency, and its ability to serve backup jobs and file services simultaneously. With StorageCraft, HLB can solve multiple problems at once.

The innovative object storage backend enables multiple copies of the same data, avoiding limits and constraints imposed by traditional RAID protection schemes. This feature, associated with granular block-level inline deduplication increases the storage utilization of the system when it comes to data footprint reduction and protection.

The scale-out architecture of OneBlox enables significant growth by just adding additional drives or additional OneBlox to the Ring at any given time. And when a new OneBlox is added, there is no configuration required and data is automatically rebalanced across the Ring to further improve data placement and enabling faster recovery times in case of failures. Commodity off-the-shelf disk drives are supported and thanks to all these mechanisms, performance improves alongside capacity and availability.

The Benefits

With more than 100TB of storage deployed, Greg not only has local backups protected with a combination of Veeam Proxy servers and OneBlox, he has also addressed the disaster recovery requirement by leveraging OneBlox's remote replication. Information is continuously replicated from Los Angeles to San Francisco.

Realized Benefits

- Seamlessly scaleable storage infrastructure supporting Veeam
- Remote replication supporting disaster recovery plans

Greg can now respond to any business request concerning storage capacity by simply adding additional disk drives, non-disruptively, to the OneBlox Ring. Consequently, adding OneBlox to a given Ring contributes to efficiently increasing the pool of storage capacity and eliminates any storage islands.

StorageCraft's object-based scale-out architecture is far more resilient and efficient than any traditional RAID configuration. Thanks to its Ring topology, each copy of information is distributed across the entire Ring. At the same time, inline-deduplication vastly improves efficiency, capacity utilization, and bandwidth utilization as data is remotely replicated.

Both initial and ongoing Infrastructure costs are kept to a minimum due to the unique characteristics of StorageCraft's bring your own drive support. Greg is free to use commodity hard drives in nearly any configuration.

Furthermore, with StorageCraft's architecture there are no unpleasant financial surprises the next time the firm needs additional storage. With commodity disk drives declining 30%+ per year, HLB will always enjoy lower $/TB pricing over time thanks to the availability of ever bigger and cheaper disks. This eliminates the historically unpleasant rising staircase effect that legacy storage vendors often impose on customers. With all management and proactive monitoring performed through OneSystem, a cloud-based service, it doesn't involve any local installation and maintenance by HLB, contributing to the overall cost reduction.

Conclusion

HLB wasn't looking for a next-generation object-based architecture. It was looking for a disk-based deduplication appliance for Veeam and disaster recovery. Fortunately they found more than it had hoped for with StorageCraft. StorageCraft's next generation architecture provided many benefits and overall efficiency to the storage infrastructure when compared to point solutions and legacy storage systems.

OneBlox's innovative, efficient design, and its set of enterprise features contribute to lowering storage costs, eliminating storage islands, and providing better services to users and applications at HLB without compromising future growth and freedom of choice.

Company

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