Global Technology Leader Protects Business-Critical Data with ReadyNAS®

Profile

Since 1996, NETGEAR® has been a worldwide provider of innovative, branded technology solutions that address the networking, storage, and security needs of small and mid-size businesses, as well as home users. With a mission to be the preferred customer-driven provider of innovative networking solutions for small businesses and homes, the company offers an end-to-end networking product portfolio, with a focus on reliability and ease-of-use. Like the IT organizations in most small and mid-size companies, NETGEAR® Global IT requires stable, reliable storage that can scale to meet their growing needs – but at a price they can afford.

Background

The NETGEAR storage environment supports more than 200 servers and 600 end user systems in 25 locations throughout the world. The company's Global IT group manages a robust storage environment that includes two enterprise-class storage servers that are responsible for the primary storage of the company's file shares, as well as running Symantec Enterprise Vault and Windows Essential Business Server (EBS).

Overall, the team is satisfied with the performance of their storage environment. However, growing storage needs and the call for change from senior management prompted the team to begin looking for areas where they could get more out of their limited resources, without depleting their limited IT budget.

The team realized that their enterprise-class storage was a remarkably expensive method for file serving, so they decided to migrate the file serving load to a less expensive system. This way, they could make better use of their investment in the enterprise-class servers by employing them for VMware applications and other business-critical tasks.

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PROBLEM/OBJECTIVE

SERVE THE COMPANY'S ESSENTIAL STORAGE NEEDS, WITHIN STRICT BUDGET GUIDELINES

With increasing storage needs, the NETGEAR Global IT group required a system that would provide a high level of power, performance, and expandability. High availability was also essential. In short, they needed stable, reliable storage that could scale to meet their growing needs – but at a price they could afford. "Especially in this market, we have to really watch our costs", says Bao Ly, Network Engineer in the NETGEAR Global IT Group. "But saving money couldn't be the only consideration. Like any other company, we absolutely required a system that would best serve our business needs. We needed a highly available architecture, a good price/performance ratio, and something that was the right size for our current storage needs, yet could be expanded later, as our needs grow."

The team considered many different alternatives, including those from the major enterprise-level vendors. Each of the systems that was capable of serving their power, performance, and scalability needs was too expensive – while anything they could afford would force them to make unacceptable tradeoffs. "We even looked at our own product line, since we have had so much success with ReadyNAS® systems in the small and mid-size market", says Bao. "But our needs for this system surpassed those of the rest of our environment. We really needed something that offered as close to enterprise-class performance as possible."

SOLUTION

THE NETGEAR® READYNAS® 3200 HAS THE POWER AND PERFORMANCE REQUIRED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF A DEMANDING, GLOBAL BUSINESS – FOR LESS THAN HALF THE PRICE OF COMPETITIVE OFFERING

Eight months ago, the team implemented two independent NETGEAR® ReadyNAS® 2100 rackmount storage systems in each of four remote locations – Hong Kong, Taipei, Nanjing, and Munich. They proved to be a reliable, cost-effective solution for the company's file share backup needs for the remote offices.

With those successful deployments, coupled with the recent introduction of the NETGEAR® ReadyNAS® 3200 rackmount storage system, the team realized that there was now a NETGEAR product that could provide the same benefits – but at the Corporate Headquarters level. A little over two months ago, the team obtained a ReadyNAS 3200 with 6TB for the company's San Jose, CA headquarters to use as a file server and to host an array of business applications, including the company's SharePoint. "In all honesty, the initial reason for looking at the ReadyNAS product line was because we wanted to run NETGEAR on NETGEAR", says Bao. "But it would have been negligent and reckless to have put in something that couldn't do the job, just because we wanted to use our own equipment. Ours or not, it had to work."

The ReadyNAS 3200 provides everything the team was looking for, but at less than half the price of anything else in its class. "The 3200 gives us 90 percent of the power and performance we can get from any of the major enterprise storage vendors, but at less than half the price", says Bao. "Even if it wasn't our product, finances come into play for any business. The ReadyNAS 3200 offers everything we really needed."

RESULT

RUNNING "NETGEAR ON NETGEAR" PROVES TO BE AN EFFECTIVE DECISION

For the past two months, the team has been conducting extensive testing on the ReadyNAS 3200 system, prior to placing it into a production environment. They have thoroughly tested its iSCSI SAN capabilities, and are in the process of using it for NFS mounts for VMware and Linux jumpstarts. The system has performed beautifully under the rigorous testing, with no major issues. "We're not testing it as a NETGEAR team, with the purpose of validating our own product", explains Bao. "We're testing it as a real IT team running the infrastructure for a real business. If the product wasn't living up to our standards, we would walk away from it just as quickly as we would any other vendor's product."

As with many larger companies, true enterprise-class storage was simply too expensive for Bao and his team to commit to less critical applications. They found that while the NETGEAR ReadyNAS 2100 and 3200 may not be the best choice for all of their storage needs, these systems make an ideal complement to the company's existing enterprise-class solutions, to reduce their storage investment. "We don't need the 'very best' for every situation", says Bao. "When we require enterprise-class, we buy enterprise-class, but the ReadyNAS systems are plenty sufficient for our less critical needs. They provide solid performance at a far lower price."

In addition to the cost benefits the ReadyNAS 3200 provided for their main backups, the NETGEAR Global IT group also discovered that they could cut the time required to copy the data to secondary storage. Moreover, since the 3200 uses less expensive disks, the data only needs to be committed to tape when it is ready for off-site storage. As a result, the the team will reap the cost savings on the less expensive disks, a less expensive system, and fewer tapes – yet still achieve the high availability, performance, and scalability benefits they require.

Bao expects to have the ReadyNAS 3200 functioning in the full NETGEAR production environment within the next month, and he has high expectations for the newest member of the ReadyNAS family. "The 3200 gives us everything we need, without having to pay a fortune", says Bao. "For us, the 3200 fits the bill for our demanding environment."

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