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Case Study

Increasing cloud demand sees Arafura expand storage capabilities with NETGEAR

Profile

Industry: Internet Service Provider

Organisation: Arafura Connect

Challenge: Required increased storage capacity to cater for the growing demand for cloud services.

Solution: NETGEAR ReadyDATA 5200

Overview

Arafura Connect, an Australian ISP based in the Northern Territory has been delivering wireless and dial up Internet since the mid-1990s. Originally providing homes and businesses in Northern Territory with a range of Internet solutions, Arafura Connect has significantly expanded over the past 15 years in terms of size, services and reach.

Today their offering has evolved to include a suite of services such as high-speed wireless Internet, WiFi hotspot services, ADSL and Fibre connections and domain hosting. They support over 2000 companies, ranging from automotive repair shops to local government councils to business franchises, both in Australia and worldwide.

While Arafura Connect has offered cloud services through the Arafura Cloud platform for the past seven years, Managing Director Michael Feldbauer has seen demand for this service increase dramatically since 2010.

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The Challenge

"We have seen a significant increase in our hosting and cloud business over recent years" said Michael. "With IT budgets shrinking, many of our clients want to move from their existing IT platform to a solution that maximises operational expenditure. This has seen many of our customers move to a cloud based solution and we anticipate this trend to continue."

Although Arafura Connect's storage infrastructure was upgraded in 2010, Michael knew that in order to keep up with business growth and the explosion in demand for cloud solutions from his customers, Arafura needed to refresh its storage infrastructure.

"While our existing storage platform was reliable, the growing demand for Arafura Cloud and hosting services saw the need to increase storage capacity" Michael explained. "We needed to ensure our system could continue to provide our customers with the reliable service they are accustomed to, now and into the future."

The Solution

Being a NETGEAR Platinum Plus Partner, Michael has relied on NETGEAR storage and switching solutions for over 12 years. "Our business has evolved with NETGEAR. Arafura Connect has used three generations of NETGEAR storage products and they have never missed a beat, so we knew another NETGEAR solution was the way to go."

Impressed with the reliability, efficiency and price of previous NETGEAR products, Michael selected the ReadyDATA 5200. Installation was completed in less than two hours, instantly expanding and enhancing storage capability and network speeds, all while seamlessly fitting in with Arafura's existing storage infrastructure. "The ReadyDATA platform was installed quickly, and was simple to configure" Michael said. "Within two hours we were already migrating data."

"The ReadyDATA is an enterprise level solution with a SMB price point" said Michael. "It comes preinstalled with everything Arafura needs such as thin provisioning, block-level replication and deduplication. This means our business can securely share, store and protect critical data across the network."

"The scalability of the product also impressed us" continued Michael. "The ReadyDATA 5200 has the ability to hold up to 180 terabytes in storage. We even have the option of installing new drive trays while the system is running, decreasing planned system downtime. This is great for server virtualisation, file sharing, disk-based backup and online storage consolidation" Michael concluded.

The Outcome

The ReadyDATA 5200 has become a real asset to Arafura Connect after only five months of implementation. Being able to employ a range of drives (SATA, SSD and SAS) across the one device is cost effective and has allowed Arafura to do more with less.

"Using twenty three terabytes of redundant SAS storage, Arafura has been able to run more than 60 virtual machines from the one device without compromising connection speed," said Michael. "This is a significant increase compared to how many virtual machines we were previously able to support. Simultaneously, we have been able to use SATA storage on the same device to maintain archives, saving both time and money."

For Arafura's growing business, the ReadyDATA's ability to scale and add additional storage as required is very cost effective. "As we continue to expand, the ReadyDATA will scale to support our storage needs, but we aren't left paying for storage we aren't using. With the ability to add up to 180 terabytes of storage as we need it, extra capacity is available almost instantaneously" said Michael. "We already anticipate adding an additional array within 12 months."

The ability to take unlimited real-time snapshots has also been beneficial to Michael and the team at Arafura. Previously if there was a problem with a machine, the team had to restore an image from the backup system which was costly and time-consuming. With the real time snapshots function, the team now have immediate access and are instantly able to recall and restore a snapshot of the machine. This means they can identify and diagnose any problems and remotely apply a solution.

One of the biggest benefits Arafura has seen is the increased storage capacity via the ReadyDATA's deduplication feature. This enables Michael and the Arafura team to back up data without losing hard disk storage to duplicated data.

The ReadyDATA 5200 has also satisfied Michael's desire to safely store and protect important and sensitive data and is an essential part of Arafura's disaster recovery plan.

Through the cloud managed block level replication function (that comes included with the unit, licence free), Arafura has been able to easily configure the replication of their live virtual machines to another ReadyDATA 5200 held offsite at their Brisbane based data centre. This provides peace of mind without a noticeable impact to their bandwidth. At any stage, Michael is able to verify the business applications within replicated virtual machines are intact, without any disruption to normal operations or impact to ongoing replication.

The combination of ReadyDATA's intelligent snapshots and replication technology allows Arafura to meet narrow recovery time and recovery point objectives that were previously only achievable with complex and costly storage solutions from the "Big IT" vendors.

So impressed with the performance and reliability of the ReadyDATA 5200, Michael has since decided to expand the primary unit with an additional 24 Drive expansion tray and add another 12 SAS Drives. "With the NETGEAR ReadyDATA 5200 we have absolute confidence that our customers will receive the best service possible" Michael concluded. "We will definitely continue to evolve with NETGEAR down the track."

About NETGEAR

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