

3X Performance Gains and a 4:1 Data Reduction Clear Roadblocks at City of Fairfax

CITY OF FAIRFAX CASE STUDY



Government
www.fairfaxva.gov

Challenge

The IT team struggled with lagging performance, time-consuming management, and frustrating limitations.

Results

- **Performance** – Pages load 3x faster for end users, and SQL downloads dropped from one minute to just a few seconds—improving staffers’ response time to public inquiries.
- **Faster backups** – Backups now run in half the time.
- **Clearing roadblocks** – The city can finally run its SQL database in its virtual environment.
- **Data compression** – The city gained 4:1 data reduction, leaving plenty of room to scale.
- **Manpower efficiency** – The IT team reduced storage management time significantly.
- **Cost-savings** – Multiple six-figure savings free the city to pursue other IT objectives.

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Mark Perry
Director, Information Technology

Company Challenge

Capacity Constraints Put the Brakes on Goals

Municipal IT teams are continuously asked to do more – but without increasing budgets or manpower. As its data footprint neared capacity, the IT team at the City of Fairfax struggled with lagging performance, time-consuming management, and frustrating limitations. The city’s SQL database wouldn’t run in its virtual environment without taxing the host. And the city lacked the headroom to move forward with critical initiatives such as a disaster recovery strategy.

“We’re a nine-person shop supporting 500 employees,” said Mark Perry, Director, Information Technology. “With our previous storage, performance issues and storage management were killing us.”

Results

Accelerating Automatrix Platform Performance by 3x

In the city’s search for a new storage solution, Datrium’s Automatrix platform stood out for its ability to add more capacity for the dollar, accelerate performance, reduce management hassles, and provide mission-critical scalability for the city to move forward with its goals.

With Automatrix, Fairfax could pair the solution with any type of server hardware, freeing the city from a full hardware swap in the short term and down the road. “With Datrium, we’re more future-proof,” Perry said. “We can replace hardware as our needs and budget allow, and actually increase performance as we add hosts. That’s the beauty of the Automatrix system.”

Teaming with Datrium partner, ClearPath, the City of Fairfax implemented Datrium DVX with Dell servers. The new approach elevates performance for both the IT team and the city staffers it serves. From an IT perspective, backups now run in half the time. Fairfax also gained the throughput, for the first time, to run its SQL database in its virtual environment.

“We now have a flexible, scalable, high-performing infrastructure on which we can grow.”

Mark Perry
Director, Information Technology

As for city employees, one of the financial offices moved from a physical to a virtual server environment and actually accelerated page loads by three times. Likewise, the time to download from SQL to Excel dropped from one minute to a few seconds. And in some departments, accelerated load times improve staffers' response time to public inquiries.

Before, the city's data store routinely edged close to maximum capacity. With Automatrix deduplication and compression, Fairfax shrunk its data footprint by more than 75%, leaving plenty of room to scale.

Trimming Storage Management Time

Instead of multiple data stores to manage, Fairfax now tracks detailed performance analytics on an intuitive dashboard in a single browser window in vSphere. The team also said goodbye to administering LUNs or other storage artifacts. Such simplicity significantly reduced the IT team's storage management time, freeing resources to focus on more strategic objectives.

Support from Datrium further keeps the team on task. “We got a call from Datrium saying we lost connection to a data node,” Perry said. “That's proactive support compared to the reactive support we get from most vendors.”

Saving Multiple Six Figures

In selecting Datrium, the city spent 50% less than projected on its storage upgrade. Over the following seven years, Fairfax expects to save approximately 40% by eliminating the maintenance costs associated with a second data center and with a model of disaster recovery as a service (DRaaS). In the police department alone, Datrium reduces the number of physical servers needed, saving \$150,000 over a 4-year timeframe. In total, savings exceeding multiple six figures open the door for the city to pursue other IT initiatives.

Looking ahead, the IT department can scale more easily and cost-effectively as its data footprint grows. With the additional capacity, Fairfax is moving forward with a true disaster recovery strategy – in fact, disaster recovery as a service – in its main office and others, such as the police department. “We now have a flexible, scalable, high-performing infrastructure on which we can grow,” Perry said.

About the City of Fairfax

Fairfax, located in northern Virginia, was founded in 1805 and today is home to approximately 24,000 residents. The city of Fairfax employs 500 people.

Learn more about Datrium at www.datrium.com

