Ohio National Speeds Business-Critical Applications and Gains DR Agility with Less IT Investment

OHIO NATIONAL CASE STUDY

Datrium™

Ohio National Financial Services®

Financial Services
www.ohionational.com

Challenge

The company's server and storage became limiting, however a hardware upgrade was cost prohibitive and still wouldn't meet the company's performance and DR goals.

Results

- 40% less application latency

- 65% reduction in data footprint

- Data migration in minutes instead of weeks

- More performance and capacity, along with replication, storage automation and blanket encryption, without a hardware upgrade, saving 40%

"Without Datrium, we would have had to replace our blade server infrastructure prematurely just to meet some of our goals. As it was, we met more objectives than we even planned for 40 percent less cost than expected."

Bruce Seaman
Senior Compute Storage Engineer

Company Challenge

Servers, Storage Hold the Company Back
For the IT team at Ohio National, the pursuit of availability, performance and security drive every decision. Thus when the Ohio National Financial Services company ran into limitations with the server and storage environment, they knew they needed to make a change.

End users experienced unacceptable latency on their primary revenue-generating application, life insurance software. The legacy environment also couldn't accommodate wish-list objectives such as encryption in flight. And the final motivator for a change – an upcoming data center move.

But the full hardware swap required to meet all these needs would come at a steep price.

Results

Data Migration in Minutes – not Weeks
Bruce Seaman, Senior Compute Storage Engineer, fully expected the company would need to invest half a million dollars to upgrade the environment to meet their goals – until he spoke with a Datrium representative.

With Datrium's Automatrix platform, Seaman and the team would cross off all the objectives on the wish list, and more:

- Increased capacity and performance by simply adding host flash
- Storage automation
- Blanket encryption, on host, in flight and at rest
- One storage pool, cutting management time
- Simplified replication to a co-location site

What's more, Ohio National could do it all without a hardware replacement. While Seaman did compare Datrium to other options, none came close to delivering comparable benefits or such an attractive cost of ownership.

"Without Datrium, we would have had to replace our blade server infrastructure prematurely just to meet some of our goals," Seaman said. "As it was, we met more objectives than we even planned for 40 percent less cost than expected."

Datrium immediately delivered on expectations as Seaman began moving to the new co-location site. In using Datrium, he avoided having to wait weeks to restore several terabytes from tape. When he moved to the co-lo facility, they turned Datrium on, changed the IPs and name, and it was up and running. "It was minutes' worth of work, instead of days' or weeks' worth of work," Seaman said.

Happier Customers with a Faster Life Insurance Application

Ohio National's environment is now 80 percent virtualized, with all testing, quality assurance and some production running on Datrium. With always-on deduplication, Ohio National reduced its data footprint by 65 percent.

With Datrium turned on, the company also noted that latency on its critical life insurance application dropped in half. And even as they have increased the number of hosts and virtual machines, performance never wanes.

"We don't even make a bleep on the radar on Datrium," Seaman said. "I don't think we can wear it out, in my honest opinion."

Automated Storage Management

Seaman and the team additionally eliminated the minutiae of storage management. With one storage pool, they no longer have to provision LUNs or deal with storage artifacts. "You plug in the drives and Datrium finds them automatically. It's already on," Seaman said.

With VMware and Datrium, Ohio National also saves time by automating storage tasks with artificial intelligence. "If we're running out of space, we can use VMware PowerCLI to expand drives automatically – without having to touch them," Seaman said. "I save time, money and energy, and I'm able to produce things faster for the company as opposed to involving the team."

Near-Instant Recovery

Built-in, verified, instant backup and recovery advanced the company's DR strategy. Backup has become "set it and forget it," according to Seaman. At the push of a button, the IT team replicates on a second Datrium DVX using Datrium autonomous data services. "We don't have to worry about backup technology missing a file because it's built in and all there."

Instead of recovery taking up to 12 hours, now it's near-instant. Staff no longer have to wait for the network to be up, for snapshots to take place, and to build the host to bring it all back up.

Previously, in the event of a loss, they estimated recovery of testing and QA data within one to two weeks, pulled from backup. Now, it's back within minutes.

The Agility to Pivot

For Seaman, flexibility has proven to be perhaps the biggest benefit of Datrium. As he looks ahead to server upgrades, he isn't locked into any specific hardware. IT agility to pivot quickly with the business is a key success factor for the team and an expectation of company executives.

"The biggest selling point for Datrium is the flexibility it gives you with your infrastructure," he said. "Datrium works with anything, so we're able to pivot based on our business needs. That's the beauty of it."

About Ohio National

Ohio National has been helping individuals, families and businesses protect what matters most. Through its network of financial professionals across 49 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, the company provides insurance products and financial protection. As of December 31, 2017, its affiliated companies have $42 billion total assets under management. Visit ohionational.com for more information.

Learn more about Datrium at www.datrium.com.

> "The biggest selling point for Datrium is the flexibility it gives you with your infrastructure," he said. "Datrium works with anything, so we're able to pivot based on our business needs. That's the beauty of it."
>
> **Bruce Seaman**
> Senior Compute Storage Engineer