

Automotive Data Solutions Migrates to Acropolis

Nutanix Storage and Virtualization Platform Simplifies Management, Improves Scalability, and Lowers CapEx and OpEx

Automotive Data Solutions Inc.

Automotive Data Solutions Inc. (ADS) is a privately held Canadian company that specializes in the development and marketing of remote start and audio integration solutions for the automotive aftermarket. Founded in 2005, ADS' award-winning products are now sold and installed through a network of authorized dealers across North America, South America, Europe, and Russia. ADS also develops several private label solutions for various strategic partners and markets worldwide.

IT Challenges

Marcello Gentile is the director of systems administration at ADS. He and his team of four system administrators manage all of the IT infrastructure for the company's R&D, front office, and production warehouse environments. "We sell over one million remote start units per year," Gentile explained. "Our IT systems have to be running 24 x 7 or our business will die. It's that simple."

ADS opened its first data center three years ago, using a Dell iSCSI SAN and NAS storage systems for backups. ADS virtualized its IT environment last year using VMware vSphere 5.5. "The vSphere and Dell systems worked fine at first, but we started noticing bottlenecks in the infrastructure after just a few months. We weren't in serious trouble yet, but we knew that we were going to hit a dead end fairly soon with the dedicated Dell servers."

Finding Nutanix

Gentile and his team started looking for a new storage platform that was better suited to the company's virtual environment. "We looked at a whole slew of different options, including Tintri and several legacy arrays," Gentile recalled. "Then we heard about Nutanix through one of our VARs. I looked at the hyperconverged systems and immediately understood what Nutanix was trying to do. From a pure hardware perspective, Nutanix has created a really nice device—four high-powered compute nodes and storage on the front in just one 2U box. In addition to the great technology, we liked the ease of use and scalability of the Nutanix systems. It was by far the best solution we looked at, so we decided to give it a try."

ADS purchased its first Nutanix NX-3450 system earlier this year. "After evaluating the technology based on our needs, we jumped in with both feet," Gentile admitted. "That's my style in life--when I fall in love, I dive right in! We did our homework and liked what we saw, so we were confident that it was a good decision. We now have four 4-node Nutanix systems, spread across our two data centers."

"... Our VAR kept trying to sell us the new Dell systems, but I told them we're buying Nutanix instead. It's the most innovative, scale-out data fabric for storage, compute, and virtualization platform on the market today."

- Marcello Gentile, Director of Systems Administration, Automotive Data Solutions, Inc.



Industry

Automotive Parts Manufacturer

Business Needs

Licensing costs for the VMware vSphere hypervisor were too high and management of the virtual environment management was very complex

Solution

- Nutanix Xtreme Computing Platform
- Nutanix Acropolis with Acropolis Hypervisor (AHV)
- Nutanix Prism Management Solution

Benefits

- Obtained a turnkey solution with built-in virtualization and integrated management that is simple to deploy, scale, and support
- Eliminated the need for standalone SAN and NAS-based storage
- Reduced the complexity of legacy virtualization environment
- Lowered CapEx and OpEx of virtualized environment



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Starting with VMware vSphere on Nutanix

After a fast installation, ADS migrated its customer-facing website database and several other workloads over to Nutanix. “We originally deployed our virtual environment using VMware vSphere 5.5,” Gentile explained. “We weren’t having any performance problems with that hypervisor yet, we just didn’t like the pricing model. VMware licensing is very expensive. I probably wouldn’t have gotten the budget for purchasing all of the additional storage we needed if we also had to add in the vSphere licenses, vCenter software, and all of the other tools we would need to operate that environment. We needed to find a better way to lower our CapEx and OpEx costs if we wanted to expand our IT infrastructure.”

Moving up to Acropolis Hypervisor

Nutanix Acropolis is a turnkey infrastructure platform delivering enterprise-class storage, compute, and virtualization services for any application. As a fully integrated IT solution, it eliminates the cost and complexity of legacy datacenter products that are individually deployed and separately managed. To fully support VMware vSphere and Microsoft Hyper-V, Acropolis includes a built-in hypervisor. The Nutanix Acropolis Hypervisor (AHV) is built on proven open-source KVM technology and is hardened to meet enterprise security needs. With enhanced security, self-healing capabilities based on SaltStack and enterprise-grade VM management, AHV delivers a better overall user experience at a lower TCO.

“I’m not much of a commercial software person, my history and roots have been in open source for the last 20 years,” Gentile admitted. “So when I found out that Nutanix was introducing AHV — an open-source hypervisor—I was very excited. We looked at the product roadmap and liked where Nutanix was headed, so we asked for a demo unit so we could start testing AHV in our development environment.”


Using Nutanix Prism

Acropolis works with Nutanix Prism to give administrators consumer-grade simplicity in managing their entire virtual environments. “We love using Nutanix Prism,” noted Gentile. “It’s simple to use, since it is already integrated into the Nutanix solution. We like that it shows us everything we need to know in just one screen. With AHV, we don’t have to log into third-party tools like vCenter and a lot of other interfaces anymore. As for its functionality, layout, and user-friendliness, Prism is a brilliant solution. To be honest, I think that the VMware approach to management is outdated. Having vCenter running on a separate machine and requiring manual configuration with third-party databases for high availability is simply archaic technology. You shouldn’t have to manage the management plane—it should be built into the box, like it is with Acropolis and Prism.”

The Hypervisor for the Future

“We are still in the process of deploying AHV into production, but we are already loyal fans after seeing how well it is working in our dev environment,” Gentile shared. “It’s basically an out-of-the-box experience with Acropolis and Prism. Everything’s built-in—the storage, compute, and the least amount of cables—it’s actually fun to work with it. I have worked with practically every type of hardware and software platform you can imagine over the last 20 years, and I’ve never seen anything as beautiful as Nutanix. Nutanix support stands behind the entire infrastructure stack, which means any issues will get resolved faster without endless handoffs between vendors. Our VAR kept trying to sell us the new Dell systems, but I told them we’re buying Nutanix Acropolis. It’s the most innovative, scale-out data fabric for storage, compute, and virtualization platform on the market today.”



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Nutanix delivers invisible infrastructure for next-generation enterprise computing, elevating IT to focus on the applications and services that power their business. The company’s software-driven Xtreme Computing Platform natively converges compute, virtualization and storage into a single solution to drive simplicity in the datacenter.

Using Nutanix, customers benefit from predictable performance, linear scalability and cloud-like infrastructure consumption.

Learn more at www.nutanix.com or follow up on Twitter @nutanix.

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