

San Mateo County Relies on Nutanix Infrastructure and Global Services

Nutanix Enables County to Lower CapEx and OpEx, Simplify Management, and Achieve Easy Scalability

San Mateo County Background

Within its 455 square miles, San Mateo County is home to some of the most spectacular and varied geography in the United States. In addition, the county is also one of the world's largest centers for innovation, with numerous technology companies at the core of Silicon Valley.

Jon Walton is the CIO of San Mateo County. His organization is responsible for all countywide core IT services, supporting everything from public safety, healthcare services, public works, and the traditional suite of government applications. "San Mateo is a large county with a mix of high tech, dense urban areas, and rural and agricultural-based regions," noted Walton. "We have to figure out the best way to deliver services to a very geographically diverse, economically diverse, and technology diverse community."

Getting Ready for a Technology Refresh

The San Mateo County IT department was preparing for a much-needed technology refresh earlier this year. "We had a lot of aging infrastructure that was purchased five to ten years ago," Walton explained. "Our network, storage, and servers were no longer adequate for our IT requirements. Since we are a government agency, we're not like private companies where we have a budget to refresh our infrastructure on an annual basis. We needed a technology solution that could solve our current challenges—and also enable easy scalability for future growth."

San Mateo County's existing IT environment consisted of a broad mix of infrastructure solutions. "Historically the County purchased various best-of-breed solutions to meet the needs of individual projects," Walton reported. "But since all of our infrastructure was designed for specific projects, there was no way to easily scale it up or out to support the new projects and solutions we wanted to implement."

Walton and his team started the search for a new storage and server solution earlier this year. "Nutanix was the best solution that met all of our criteria," Walton reported. "Nutanix is a very flexible, cost effective, and extremely scalable platform. It not only enables us to meet all of our current project goals, it is very easy to modify the configurations to meet future needs as well."

“Nutanix consultants work side-by-side with our engineers as an extension of our staff. They have intimate knowledge of what was done before and a real understanding of our business and where we want to go. They aren't just experts on the Nutanix hardware—they understand the services we want to deliver and the partner programs we're trying to run, enabling us to implement best practices in those areas as well.”

- Jon Walton, CIO, San Mateo County, California



Industry

County Government

Business Needs

San Mateo County's aging storage and server infrastructure needed a refresh. Their existing IT platform lacked scalability and was difficult to manage. San Mateo County wanted their engineers to focus on more strategic and customer-facing projects.

Solution

The Nutanix Virtual Computing Platform

Benefits

- Obtained easily scalable infrastructure
- Reduced deployment time from days to hours
- Simplified storage management
- Established a strong working partnership with Nutanix Global Services



NUTANIX™
www.nutanix.com

Fast Deployment

After evaluating a wide range of storage and server options, the county made the decision to purchase Nutanix 3060 models. “The Nutanix team promised they could have the systems up and running in less than half a day,” Walton reported. “We were skeptical at first, since it usually took weeks—and sometimes months—to get our previous solutions procured, installed, configured, and operational. The Nutanix boxes showed up at our datacenter, we put in a rack, and quickly configured the systems. Within just a few hours, the systems were operational and our engineers were poking around and making things happen. We were surprised that the installation could happen that fast.”

Saving CapEx and OpEx

The cost-effective Nutanix systems also enabled San Mateo County to reduce both capital expenditures and operating expenses. “We obtained a huge decrease in CapEx costs on day one,” Walton said. “But as we implemented the Nutanix solution, we started seeing even greater savings in our day-to-day support costs. We were able to reduce the amount of time our staff was spending on the old infrastructure—keeping it configured correctly, optimized, and running around the clock.”

The Nutanix systems are also very reliable, according to Walton. “Nutanix has eliminated all of the unplanned downtime we were experiencing in our previous environment. We haven’t had any outages on the Nutanix equipment. The Nutanix systems are self-managing and self-contained. Our engineers don’t have to spend all of their time making things work anymore—they can focus on more strategic, customer-facing projects that really add value to our services.”

Easy Scalability

Walton was also impressed with Nutanix’s easy scalability. “Simple, linear scalability is very critical for us,” noted Walton. “With our traditional architecture solution, we were always trying to figure out how many Fiber Channel switches we needed, how much storage our applications required, and how much processing power we had to purchase in advance. We spent far too much time and effort architecting and re-architecting the solution, scaling it to meet current compute needs and preparing for future projects. With Nutanix, we can buy just what we need to solve our current problems, and easily add more Nutanix blocks as we grow.”

Eliminating Planned Downtime

The Nutanix systems have also eliminated planned downtime in the storage environment. “Our engineers love the ability to reconfigure the Nutanix systems on the fly,” said Walton. “They don’t have to schedule a lot of downtime, or come in on nights and weekends to configure or upgrade the systems any more. They can move things around and grow the environment without impacting customers or making long-term, complex plans to get things done.”

Datacenter transformation journey with Nutanix Global Services

“Nutanix Consulting Services is an outstanding organization,” Walton said. “The consultants work side-by-side with our engineers as an extension of our staff. They have intimate knowledge of what was done before and a real understanding of our business and where we want to go. They aren’t just experts on the Nutanix hardware—they understand the services we want to deliver and the partner programs we’re trying to run, enabling us to implement best practices in those areas as well.” San Mateo County has a resident consultant on staff to help migrate workloads, cluster implementation, and overall datacenter design.

In addition to using Nutanix Consulting Services, San Mateo County has also employed a resident Nutanix Technical Relationship Manager (TRM). Nutanix TRMs are in-depth product experts with proven skills to help customers streamline and improve their Nutanix deployments. They serve as trusted advisors in the IT transformation journey and help customers realize the maximum benefits from their Nutanix investments. “Our TRM has been instrumental in aligning our IT strategy and requirements to the Nutanix product roadmap, shaping our overall virtualization ecosystem,” Walton said.

Attending Nutanix Training for NPP Certification

Several members of the county's IT staff attended Nutanix training. u.school provides a comprehensive range of learning activities that encompass core product training, extending out to application workloads and ultimately the full scope of web-scale IT. "Our staff learned a lot through the extensive nu.school program," noted Walton. "We now have many Nutanix Platform Professionals (NPPs) on staff. Attending training and working with the Nutanix team have been really pleasant experiences for us."

The Perfect Combination of Partnership and Agility

"Nutanix provides the ideal combination of partnership and agility," noted Walton. "Most vendors make a lot of promises during the sales cycle, but they don't always come to fruition after the paperwork has been signed. There may be an initial 'honeymoon phase,' where they do their best to make you successful, but the commitment fades away quickly. In contrast, we have established a long-term partnership with Nutanix. They want to make our deployment successful—not just for the initial deployment, but over the long-term. They support us when we have questions, help us reconfigure systems so we don't suffer downtime and outages, and enable us scale up to meet our needs."

A New 'Gold Standard' for Selecting Technologies

"I like it when my IT staff advocates for new technologies," Walton said. "Most of the time, IT teams recommend what they are already familiar with, because they have developed a high comfort level on those systems. When I first took the job of CIO of San Mateo County, our team had no experience with Nutanix. After trying out the systems in our VDI environment, our IT team members came to me and said, 'we have a lot of ideas of what we can do with the Nutanix systems, we want more of them, and we think this can really transform our business.' When selecting new infrastructure, I look at the bottom line to see whether we can afford it. But my staff has to come to me first and advocate for the new solution. To me, their endorsement and enthusiasm are the 'gold standard' for choosing new technologies."

Future Plans

San Mateo County currently has 40 Nutanix nodes, running in eight different clusters. "We discovered that the Nutanix systems not only met our VDI needs, but we could scale it out to meet the needs of a lot of other applications and databases across our organization," Walton explained. "We are also very excited about metro clustering and what that can do for us in the future around disaster recovery and redundancy. With Nutanix, we know we can cost effectively and easily replicate data and applications between our two primary data centers. With the success we have obtained for our VDI implementation, I expect our Nutanix footprint will double or triple over the next few years. Looking forward, we want to extend our Nutanix investment to build a hybrid cloud architecture for our customers. We have a range of customers that can benefit from a self-service VDI portal with a Nutanix back-end for services and storage."

Concluding Thoughts

"Our goal is to do our job so well and so cost effectively that people are excited about embracing new technologies here in San Mateo County," said Walton. "We don't have excuses anymore about why things are so expensive or why they take so long to implement. With Nutanix, compute and storage are the solution—not the problem that slows us down."

About Nutanix

Nutanix delivers web-scale converged infrastructure to medium and large enterprises with its software-driven Virtual Computing Platform, natively converging compute and storage into a single solution to drive unprecedented simplicity in the datacenter. Customers can start with a few servers and scale to thousands, with predictable performance and economics. With a proprietary elastic data fabric and consumer-grade management, Nutanix is the blueprint for application-optimized and policy-driven infrastructure.

Tel 855.NUTANIX | (855.688.2649)

Fax 408.916.4039

Email info@Nutanix.com

 @nutanix

NUTANIX™