

VidaXL Chooses Nutanix to Power Hybrid eCommerce Cloud

Fast growing online retailer puts Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform at the core of international hybrid cloud infrastructure

BUSINESS NEED

In little over a decade, Netherlands based vidaXL has grown rapidly from a two-man start-up to become an international online retailer with multiple fulfilment centres located across Europe, Australia and the USA. However, the organisation's unreliable, fragmented and hard to manage IT infrastructure was increasingly compromising its ability to meet business demand and, with further growth anticipated, a new approach was called for. That approach was to build a hybrid cloud infrastructure, combining best-of-breed public cloud services with deployment of the Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform on-premises, to provide a scalable, easy to manage and highly reliable private cloud component.

“Using the Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform to build a private cloud has enabled us to address all the issues around performance, scalability, management and support associated with our previous, diverse and fragmented, IT infrastructure. It has also made our IT much more stable and provided a firm foundation for a hybrid cloud, able to further scale and cope with growth where required.”

- Bart van Es, IT Manager, vidaXL

INDUSTRY

eCommerce

BENEFITS

- Integrated management of physical and virtual resources across distributed private cloud using Prism Central management console.
- Simplified support chain with single point of contact across all operations.
- On-premises cost savings from rack space economies plus associated reductions in maintenance, power and cooling.
- Full virtualisation at lower cost through migration of VMs to integrated Nutanix AHV hypervisor.
- Built in tools to aid integration of public cloud services as part of wider hybrid cloud infrastructure.

SOLUTION

Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform

- Prism management plane
- Prism management console
- AHV hypervisor

APPLICATIONS

- 800 hosted VMs (without systems in Google Cloud)
- SAP workloads – PO,PI, BW, BO, ECC, Fiori, WebDispatcher
- Linux databases
- Genesys PureCloud contact centre
- Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops

CHALLENGE

Rapidly growing companies will, inevitably, make compromises, especially when it comes to IT. For example, provisioning hardware and software on a project by project basis rather according to an overall plan, for example, while also having to incorporate legacy solutions inherited as a result of acquisitions and mergers. In the case of vidaXL, this had resulted in a mix of processing and storage platforms, from several different vendors, linked by unreliable VPN connections, each with its own availability and scalability issues. Moreover, it was a hard to manage collectively, compromising both day to day operations and the ability to move the business forward, as Bart Van Es, IT Manager, vidaXL, explains:

“When I joined the company we had a number of different hardware platforms from different vendors spread across multiple locations,” he said. “This not only impacted performance but also availability, with multiple points of contact when things went wrong and varying levels of support. In a business reliant on IT to promote and process over 20,000 orders per day and growing, this was a major issue.”

Adding further to the demands, the company also handles its own logistics and was building additional distribution centres in Venlo, Holland. Plus it was continuing to expand operations in Australia and the USA, looking at other locations around the globe, while further developing its own marketplace, to service the marketing and logistics needs of partner companies.

SOLUTION

Following a careful review of possible solutions, Van Es and his team decided that the best approach would be a hybrid cloud using the public Google Cloud Platform for customer facing websites, plus a private cloud to host supporting workloads - primarily SAP applications and databases. Somewhat fortuitously, the company was already running a Nutanix Enterprise Cloud pilot, the results of which convinced Van Es that it was the best solution going forward and to secure funding for installation of the Nutanix infrastructure at the company's three main sites.

“Although I was new to the Nutanix Enterprise Cloud, the pilot results quickly convinced me of its worth, with the Nutanix solution scoring highly against the competition in terms of performance and coming top of the list in terms of scalability and ease of management.”

Lower operational costs were another deciding factor, especially when it came to virtual workloads which can be hosted by the integrated Nutanix AHV hypervisor with no additional licensing.

“We could see that the AHV hypervisor would enable us to lower the cost of virtualisation significantly compared to an alternative like VMware,” commented Van Es. “Plus we couldn't find any workload it wasn't able to handle.”

That just left connectivity to address and so the team also began implementation of a company-wide MPLS VPN network to link the various parts of its new hybrid cloud together in a fast, secure and reliable manner.

CUSTOMER OUTCOME

With assistance from specialist partner [ICT Partners](#), the first Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform clusters were installed at vidaXL's three main data centres in Holland, a process that took just 5 weeks to complete. Existing workloads were then migrated to the Nutanix AHV hypervisor at each site. That included the SAP applications and supporting back end databases needed to run the core business, together with one of the largest Genesys contact centre deployments in Europe. There was also an extensive Citrix implementation to provide the workforce of over 1,400 employees with virtual desktops and apps.

"Thanks to ICT Partners and Nutanix we've been able to get the core part of our hybrid cloud in place very quickly indeed," commented Van Es, "linked by a secure MPLS network to front-end applications hosted by the Google Cloud Platform. And it all works extremely well, with none of the performance glitches or support problems we had before. There's just one number to call when things go wrong and a rapid response when, on the rare occasion that happens."

Van Es is similarly impressed by the ability to monitor and manage the entire Nutanix infrastructure, balance loads and fix problems from the same console, which, he says, makes the lives of his support teams a lot easier.

"Staff can drop in and report a problem and I can usually get someone to fix it straight away, rather than spend hours finding out what's causing it. The Nutanix software is also a lot more stable so I've now got engineers able to spend weekends with their families instead of fixing the infrastructure," he said. "They're happy guys and that makes me happy too."

NEXT STEPS

With its private cloud now successfully operating across its on-premises Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform clusters, the IT team at vidaXL have time to take stock of wider issues and look at other projects. To this end there are plans to take advantage of the easy scalability of the Nutanix solution and look at balancing loads between private and public cloud platforms.

"The Nutanix private cloud more or less looks after itself," explains Van Es, "giving us the breathing space we needed to fine tune our workloads, re-locate them if necessary and look at how the additional hybrid cloud tools and technologies available as part of the Nutanix solution, could further benefit our business."



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