

Inspection, Test and Compliance Company Leads By Example With Nutanix

SOCOTEC Builds On Nutanix Cloud Platform To Exceed Customer Expectations Of Technological Excellence

About SOCOTEC

Industry: Inspection, test and compliance

Applications

- Windows infrastructure services
- Web servers
- Microsoft Exchange
- Microsoft SQL
- Server in-house apps

Products:

- [Prism](#)

Solutions:

- [Business Critical and Enterprise Apps](#)
- [VMware](#)

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Working alongside clients in construction, property, and industrial sectors, leading inspection, test and compliance specialist SOCOTEC prides itself on exceeding customer expectations through market leading expertise, operational excellence and technological innovation. Delivering on those aims, however, is dependent on agile, scalable and easy to manage IT so, when it came to replacing its end of life legacy IT infrastructure, the company decided it needed a lot more than a simple upgrade.

Benefits

- Enhanced agility through on-demand resource scaling and centralised management of all physical and virtual resources from a single interface
- Seamless backup with granular recovery down to the file level
- Greater availability through comprehensive replications and failover capabilities
- Load balancing of workloads across clusters to meet demand requirements
- Flexibility to change virtualisation platform due to hypervisor neutral Nutanix architecture
- Shop window on company's technical expertise and ability to exceed customer expectations

"As a key component of the services we have to offer, our IT is highly visible and, done right, a real showcase for our technical expertise.

Nutanix is enabling us to make those services much more agile, scalable and easy to manage but, more than that, demonstrate our commitment to staying up to date with technology and exploiting it to routinely exceed customer expectations."

– Dan Bloor, Head of IT Operations, SOCOTEC Group

Challenges

With its legacy infrastructure reaching end of life, SOCOTEC was in the market for a replacement which was not only faster, but more reliable, flexible and easy to manage. Of equal importance, however, the replacement also needed to reflect the technical expertise and leading edge services offered to customers as Dan Bloor, Head of IT Operations, explains.

"The infrastructure needed a refresh for sure but, because we sell ourselves on technical expertise and excellence, we needed to do more than just upgrade processors and add RAM. Having looked at what was available it became clear that a hyperconverged infrastructure offered the best fit, enabling us to be more agile and responsive to customer demand whilst also providing us with a shop window of what we can do.

With the right vendor, the team also believed that hyperconvergence would equip the company to take advantage of cloud and other technological advances as a means of moving the business forward. Better backup and disaster recovery, too, were among the prerequisites, added to which Dan and his team wanted a solution that would cause as little disruption as possible.

Solution

With all these needs in mind the team looked at a number of products before recommending migration to the Nutanix Cloud Platform which would be deployed on-premise in two separate data centres.

"Although highly redundant in its own right, we opted to have two separate Nutanix clusters, to provide for load balancing and rapid failover for disaster recovery," commented Dan. "We also upgraded our backup solution, choosing Veeam because it was tailored specifically to the Nutanix infrastructure and promised us the granularity and ease of use missing from our existing setup."

The last component was the hypervisor, with SOCOTEC choosing to stick with VMware to minimise the work required when migrating existing workloads and minimising disruption.

"The fact that we could continue to use VMware alongside the Nutanix AHV hypervisor was a real bonus," said Dan. "Not only did it enable us to migrate existing workloads and get them working straight away, but check out AHV and use that where appropriate."

Customer Outcomes

The SOCOTEC Nutanix Cloud Platform now supports over 220 virtual machines, predominantly hosting Windows applications with around 20 Linux VMs also in the mix.

Performance gains were immediately apparent following migration but, according to Dan, the biggest benefit has been the agility afforded by the on-demand scalability of the Nutanix platform.

"With the old infrastructure it could take days to spin up new virtual machines," he commented, "but with Nutanix we can bring up new VMs in minutes, scale them just as quickly and balance loads across the two clusters as and when we want. Our developers love it, as does the support team which can spend more time on business critical tasks rather than firefighting just to keep the IT lights on."

Additional storage nodes were recently added to cope with a number of business acquisitions with no impact on availability. The enhanced backup and disaster recovery capabilities too, have gone down well. In particular the ability to recover individual files in minutes compared to hours with the previous backup solution, plus seamless failover of whole applications when needed.

Next Steps

Having been in operation for several years, the Nutanix platform is itself due for a refresh. Dan and his team are now planning a hardware upgrade and looking at migrating all of the company's VMs to the Nutanix AHV hypervisor both to make savings on virtualisation costs and to simplify management.

"Nutanix has provided us with a solid IT backbone on which to deliver and be seen to deliver the technical excellence our customers demand. Moreover it doesn't stand still, neither do we and we look forward to continuing to benefit from what Nutanix has to offer long into the future."

NUTANIX