

MAYLAND CASE STUDY



MAYLAND
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

FAST FACTS

Mayland Community College (MCC) is located in Blue Ridge section of the Appalachian Mountains of Western North Carolina. MCC had spent several years searching for a disaster recovery solution that included storage with off-site data replication abilities. With the budget constraints of an educational institution, the solution had to include a cost they could justify, which was always the deal-breaker. After being introduced to Scale Computing and putting the storage solution into a test environment for 2 months, MCC selected Scale Computing's Starter Cluster solution. The Scale solution was exactly what they were looking for at an affordable price. MCC implemented 3 S1 StorageNodes with 6TB of capacity:

- SAN/NAS storage node
- SATA drives
- iSCSI, NFS, CIFS
- Snapshot/replication
- Full mirror/striped data protection
- Unlimited software license

"As soon as I received the price quote, I knew nothing else could compete price-wise," said Ledford.

"However, I had no idea about the ease of implementation of our Starter Cluster - installation was painless. Working closely with Acumen and Scale support, we configured our system and were up and running in no time."

Case Study

Based in the Appalachian Mountains of Western North Carolina, Mayland Community College (MCC) serves more than 8,000 people each year through their educational programs, including more than twenty percent of the adult population within their service area. MCC was chartered in 1971 to serve Mitchell, Avery and Yancey counties (hence the name MAYland). Mayland has also opened two satellite campuses: Yancey County in 2001 and Avery County in 2002.

Working with MCC for the past ten years as Network Director and now Systems Administrator, Tommy Ledford had been looking to utilize virtualization to help implement a data disaster recovery plan for the community college. Ledford saw the potential to reduce IT costs and improve flexibility with server consolidation, as well as decrease downtime and improve reliability. The solution they were looking for would reduce IT costs, increase their control and make managing the entire solution convenient for the IT department. Unfortunately, the ideal solution never fit into their budget.

"We had been looking for several years to implement a disaster recovery plan with storage to replicate data off-site, but could never afford the costly virtualization licensing and storage solutions," said Ledford. "We knew the cost benefits a virtualized environment would produce but couldn't justify the upfront investment."

Solution

While in his search for possible storage solutions to enable disaster recovery, Ledford stumbled upon Scale Computing in the news. He immediately began his research, asking industry colleagues, and reading reviews and media articles. Ledford contacted Scale Computing, which is 100 percent

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Solution - Continued

channel, and was referred to a local Scale channel partner, Acumen IT, for product evaluation and a price quote. MCC evaluated Scale in a test environment for 2 months before implementing their Starter Cluster, 3 S1 StorageNodes with 6 TB of storage capacity.

Scale's storage portfolio is based on the company's Intelligent Clustered Storage (ICS) technology, which enables users to add storage hardware, known as storage nodes, as needed - without suspending services or migrating data. IT managers are able to build out storage clusters, starting with just six terabytes (raw) up to the multiple petabyte range on a single file system. As a unified storage platform, Scale's Starter Cluster line of products provides for simultaneous SAN and NAS services from a single pool of storage, providing enterprise-class, truly clustered and highly scalable storage. Scale's storage portfolio aims to reduce costs while increasing control, as well as make storage management more convenient for IT administrators.

Business Benefits

Mayland Community College implemented a Starter Cluster with 6 TB of capacity, which also allows them to scale out as their storage needs increase. Because Scale's ICS is a clustered - rather than controller-based architecture - the Starter Cluster contains three nodes, providing the redundancy and data protection MCC needed in the rare event of drive or node failure. If a single node does fail, data is immediately replicated and another node seamlessly takes the load.

"Scale's solution was not only the most cost-effective midmarket storage solution we found, but very easy to use with a simple user interface - it just works," said Ledford. "The ability to add storage as we need it and the ability to utilize virtualization are essential features."

Because of Scale's ability to cut costs, MCC was also able to leverage the benefits of virtualization with VMware's cost-effective vSphere Essentials edition. The Essentials edition included everything required for consolidating servers and for virtualization management, but lacked data recovery and high availability that the more costly vSphere Standard and Enterprise editions offered and that MCC needed. The cost of the vSphere Standard and Enterprise editions was prohibitive for MCC since they're in a smaller environment. However, because Scale's ICS™ architecture conforms to VMware best practices and is highly redundant and automatically replicated, MCC didn't have to sacrifice anything. With the help of Acumen IT, MCC learned these best practices for combining VMware with the Scale solution.

"Initially, we didn't think we could afford it," said Ledford. "But combining VMware's vSphere licensing with Scale's storage solutions gave us everything we would have had with the more costly, full-blown VMware. Acumen was integral in teaching us the best practices for our environment and without Scale, we couldn't have made virtualization a reality."

Future Plans

Mayland Community College is now working to virtualize all desktops in 2010 and plans to add several additional Scale storage nodes. This project will enable MCC to improve application management by centralizing applications, ultimately reducing costs and delivering applications instantly to users anywhere. The college also has a vision to link the three campuses together for more efficient disaster recovery and replication.

"We couldn't have been successful with our IT and virtualization initiatives, or plan for future advancements, without Scale Computing," said Ledford. "It's the solution we've been searching for over the past several years. It has definitely been worth the wait."