Datacentre + Networking

Case Study: Harrison Spinks

Nimble Storage is Harrison Spinks' springboard for Disaster Recovery success

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Chris Dawson,
Harrison Spink's IT & Strategy Manager

Overview

Hewlett Packard Enterprise

Industry
Manufacturing

Customer Profile
Harrison Spinks is a luxury bed manufacturer based in Yorkshire. They supply retail and trade customers.

The Challenge
Choose and deploy a replacement storage solution in support of a new multi-tier Disaster Recovery (DR) strategy.

The Solution
Nimble Storage hybrid-array to store DR backups. An additional HPE StoreEasy device as a further layer of protection. Veeam software to run backup routine and small upgrade to network.

The Benefits
- Speed of flash, with the affordability of disk
- Exceptional availability
- Regular backups that don't impact end-users
- Easy to manage

About Harrison Spinks
Harrison Spinks is an internationally respected, fifth-generation family business that has been manufacturing beds, mattresses and other pocket-sprung furniture in the UK since 1840. They are five-time winners of the Queen's Awards for Enterprise, a feat that no other bed manufacturer has achieved as many times.

Harrison Spinks take great pride in producing much of their own natural materials on their farm in Yorkshire, or sourcing them from local suppliers when it is not possible.
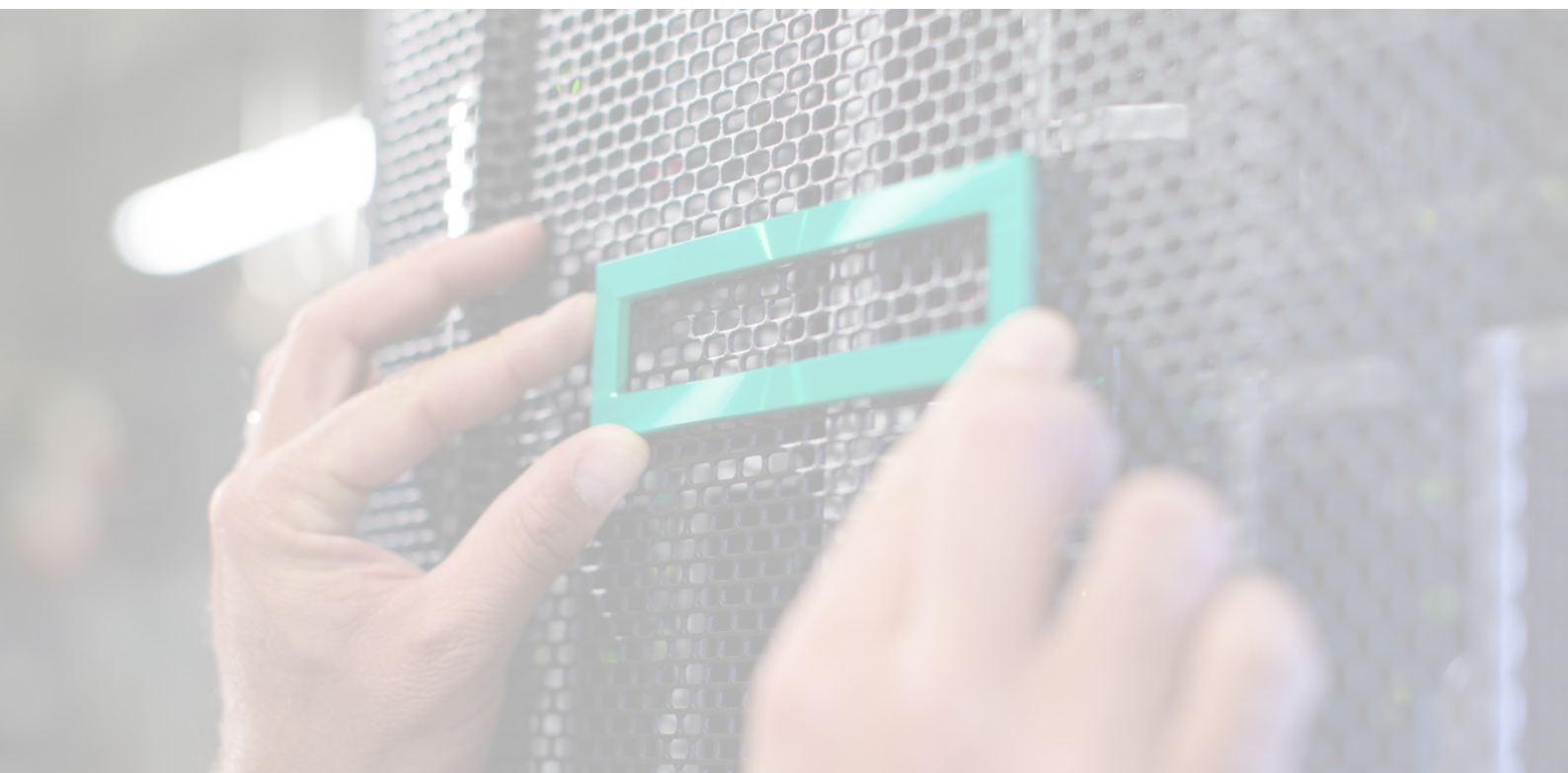
The Challenge

Harrison Spinks pride themselves on their honesty, ethical-mindedness and innovative attitude. They go to great lengths to ensure that their suppliers reflect the same values. When Harrison Spinks needed to update their ageing IT estate, seeking to modernise server, storage and network to create a more agile and scalable infrastructure, they chose to review their IT partner also. Understanding the culture of the company and possessing first-class technical expertise was essential: "I was blown away by CCS Media's approach. They carefully considered and evaluated each individual challenge of the project and showed impressive technological know-how at every turn. It really helped to move Harrison Spinks forward and transform our IT estate into one that added value to the business," explains Chris Dawson, IT & Strategy Manager for Harrison Spinks.

CCS worked with Chris Dawson and his IT Team to convert the network, server and storage systems to the latest HPE technology. Looking back, Chris Dawson reflects on the success of the project: "We definitely selected the right technologies and the right partner. During the phased refresh, our users were completely unaffected which was extremely impressive."

With a modern core infrastructure at their disposal, Harrison Spinks wanted to build on this foundation and improve its resilience to failure. They once again turned to CCS for guidance on a storage solution as part of a new DR strategy they planned.

The original DR strategy relied upon an ageing Dell Equalogic solution that was beginning to encounter performance and reliability issues. With the threat of cyber-attacks and unforeseen events being so prevalent for every business, no IT team can afford to have any 'weak links' in their infrastructure. Harrison Spinks is no exception and identified the storage would need replacement. They wanted to create a multi-layered DR strategy spanning several locations to offer reliable protection and lots of redundancy, all while harnessing modern technologies and techniques.

Due to the success of their HPE 3PAR production storage, initial thoughts turned to installing a third device. However, 3PAR is built for mission-critical environments and attracts a cost commensurate with this task, plus specialist skills to administer. Harrison Spinks' IT team consists of just 8 people so resource and skills is an important consideration in any investment decision. With these factors in mind, CCS believed that selecting 3PAR would be a case of over-engineering a solution to the problem.

The Solution

Instead, CCS proposed HPE Nimble Storage, which also offers 6 x 9s (99.9999%) reliability, but at a fraction of the price of 3PAR. CCS arranged an online demo of Nimble in conjunction with the HPE storage team. Chris Dawson says: "The demo proved to me just how easy the Nimble storage solution would be to manage, and also highlighted that despite costing significantly less than our current 3PAR solution, we would not be comprising on function or performance."

Chris Dawson worked with the CCS pre-sales team to determine the perfect Nimble storage configuration for Harrison Spinks' needs. The CCS team prompted Chris Dawson to consider Nimble's 20TB hybrid-storage array, which would create an optimised storage solution by blending both flash storage and traditional disk. At half the cost of 3PAR, the hybrid variant proposed would offer comparable performance versus 3PAR by conducting 98% of data reads from SSD. The 20TB disk space would also offer ample headroom to function as the DR target for future backups.

Veeam was also selected to run the backup/replication routines, because of Harrison Spinks' past experience working with it and its ability to backup virtual machines both to the new Nimble Storage solution as well as the public cloud for further resiliency. For additional protection, a HPE StoreEasy device was deployed to receive a final backup from the Nimble Storage array, which in turn is backed up to tape. The resulting DR strategy means that they now have five layers of resilience.

Services

Project Management	Asset Tagging	Pre-Delivery Config Support	Recycling/ Asset Disposal	O365 Migration	Installation Services

"CCS brought great knowledge and skill to the process and acted as an important intermediary between ourselves and HPE, translating our objectives and technical considerations, giving us real peace of mind at every stage."

Chris Dawson,
Harrison Spink's IT & Strategy Manager

The Benefits

Chris Dawson found the process of deployment and getting operational to be remarkably easy: "HPE advised us that as long as we connected the Nimble device to our network, then they would be able to remotely connect to the machine and set it up. Claims like this are often made, but it really was that simple. It was ridiculously easy. There was no need for onsite engineers, and we had the solution in operation within a couple of hours. It was great."

Not only was the deployment a breeze, but Harrison Spinks have experienced zero-downtime since go-live. This is due in part to the InfoSight software, inbuilt in all modern HPE storage arrays, which instantly detects and self-remediates issues as they occur. Chris Dawson describes it as a true 'set and forget' system and extols the ease of management as being the solution's greatest virtue. The self-sufficiency of the solution has been invaluable to Harrison Spinks, as processes such as firmware updates are now achieved not only in a fraction of the time, but also without third-party help. Chris Dawson also suggests the performance of the solution has been impressive: "Our Nimble array comfortably delivers 20-30,000 IOPs, which is absolutely incredible."

The Nimble solution has also added unexpected value by supporting Harrison Spinks' test and development processes. They have discovered they have both performance and capacity to run additional services without affecting their backup routine. "Ironically during test and development, it actually performs better than our production environment!" claims Chris Dawson.

Working with CCS Media

Chris Dawson attributes CCS with playing a hugely significant role in achieving a solution that was the perfect fit for Harrison Spinks: "CCS brought great knowledge and skill to the process and acted as an important intermediary between ourselves and HPE, translating our objectives and technical considerations, giving us real peace of mind at every stage."

Chris Dawson concludes: "Our working relationship with CCS is one where we feel they always have our best interests at heart. We had a really clear vision of what we wanted to achieve, and CCS worked alongside my team to shape our ideas into a functional and economic solution that outperforms our expectations. Our partnership with CCS is one that will continue to add value to our business for a long time to come."

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