South Gloucestershire Council Case Study

A Future-Proof Solution

South Gloucestershire Council is a mixed urban and rural authority located in the South West of England, covering 53,665 hectares and serving a population of 269,000. The Council had decided to undertake a major Transformation Programme, designed to deliver savings through increased efficiency. A key component of this was for the IT department to ensure that the appropriate infrastructure was in place to support a growing number of residents.

The Council had an existing storage solution which had been in place for 6 years, but regularly suffered hardware failures. It was overprovisioned and consumed 2 x 48u racks, costing approximately £30k/year to run.

The Council's IT department required greater performance from its storage solution, and there were concerns over scalability and manageability. They also wanted to migrate their server operating systems onto the most current versions, and needed to implement a new SQL database platform which couldn't be built because of space and performance issues. The department were also being asked to do 'more with less' due to a reduction in team size, so future maintenance was going to be a key driver.

The Move to Hybrid

South Gloucestershire Council began to investigate Next Generation Storage technologies, including Hybrid, All-Flash and Hyperconverged, whilst considering their suitability within a Microsoft Hyper-V environment.

It was agreed that the Council should move away from systems that relied on overprovisioning and had complex licensing models, because of the issues this had previously caused. The overprovisioning, dated tiering and complicated licencing models of their existing solution eliminated the incumbent from the selection process. Nimble's Active-Passive solution came out favourably because it enabled the Council to utilise their existing Fibre Channel (FC) infrastructure. It also had no license costs or additional feature charges, had a clear and easy to understand knowledge base, simple management and reporting (which would reduce management overheads), and capacity planning offered through Nimble InfoSight.

Cristie Data were selected as the Council's chosen systems integrator because they were a local company with good, local references. Cristie worked with the

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Challenges

- Ageing solution
- Overprovisioned equipment resulting in high latency
- Increasing space and power costs
- Continuous hardware failures

Solution

- Replicated a pair of Nimble CS300 Arrays, each with a capacity expansion shelf

Benefits

- Reduced cost
- Improved performance
- Simple, automated support
- Intuative User Interface
- Pre-configured performance policies

Storage / Virtualisation
Backup / Recovery / Protection

Council's IT department on information gathering, pre-sales and product presentations and demonstrations, to assist them in making their final decision.

"Cristie were a critical partner in this project," comments Michal Malada, Data Centre Services Manager at South Gloucestershire Council. "From the outset they were very responsive, and their comprehensive product knowledge steered us in making the best decision for our company."

The Benefits of Nimble

The Nimble solution provided South Gloucestershire Council with many tangible benefits:

· **Cost** - Savings of up to £30k per annum on data centre costs.

· **Performance** - Improved performance to support the Council'scritical applications.

· **Support** - Industry-leading Auto-Support continuously monitorsthe systems, reducing support times. On-site spares improve theSLAs further.

· **User Interface** - A highly intuitive user interface enables easy andsimple storage provisioning and management.

· **Training** - With training included, the entire team were reassuredthat they would be fully briefed on the features and managementof Nimble.

· **Performance Policies** - Pre-configured policies mean much simpler management and optimised performance for each application.

Results

Improved Performance, Reduced Cost

Making use of the Council's existing FC infrastructure improved installation time and resulted in a smooth implementation. Following implementation, performance figures were tracked to provide a direct comparison with the previous storage system. These showed a dramatic reduction in storage latency along with more than a 10-fold increase in IOPs. The extensive yet easy to use management reporting provides very clear visibility of performance data, both from an historical

perspective and futures trend analysis. Capacity planning and budgeting will be much improved due to the comprehensive system information available through InfoSight.

Data Protection and Resilience

The use of snapshots has enabled the Council to roll back systems or restore them to a point in time with ease. The cloning technology is particularly useful for DR testing and is used by the Councils DBA's in their database testing procedures.

"Snapshots and cloning have made a significant improvement to the Councils RPO and RTO requirements. Efficient and easy to configure Nimble replication has enabled the Council to use QOS to limit the impact on the network during business hours, therefore maximising
the use of available bandwidth," added Malada.

"Cristie worked closely with the Council to help understand their current capacity and performance requirements, along with looking at the impact additional applications and services would have," commented Ryan Smith, Sales Director, Crisite Data. "The systems provided will ensure significant improvement in service, whilst reducing costs overall."

• About Nimble Storage

Nimble's flash storage solutions enable the consolidation of all workloads and eliminate storage silos by providing enterprises with significant improvements in application performance and storage capacity. At the same time, Nimble delivers superior data protection, while simplifying business operations and lowering costs. More than 9,000 enterprises, governments, and service providers have deployed Nimble's flash storage solutions across more than 50 countries.**www.arcserve.com**

• About Cristie Data

Cristie Data have been IT infrastructure and data management specialists for over 40 years. We take a consultative and platform agnostic approach to any customer project and advise on solutions that are best aligned to your businesses. **www.cristie.co.uk**