



## FINANCIAL SERVICES COMPANY

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Global Technology Infrastructure Manager, Worldwide Financial Services Company

# File Virtualization Yields Big Gains in Efficiency for Major Financial Services Company

One of the world’s most notable financial institutions, this company provides individuals, businesses, and organizations around the globe with a full suite of products and services including wealth management, investment banking, and insurance. The company, which was experiencing a 30 percent increase in data storage annually, wanted to better control its expanding file server environment and improve data migration processes. The IT department implemented intelligent file virtualization from F5 Networks®, and with the solution, has successfully streamlined data migration, eliminated downtime for users, and minimized storage costs.

### Business Challenges

Storage growth rates of 30 percent annually had made it increasingly difficult for this global financial services company to efficiently manage the more than 700 terabytes (TB) of data stored in its Microsoft Windows Server environment. Like many companies, this institution historically had problems handling rapid increases in .PST (email archive) files, but the latest capacity crunch was caused by the additional capacity required of today’s productivity applications.

“Applications today are more robust, and our employees are becoming more sophisticated in the way they use them,”

explains the company’s global technology infrastructure (GTI) manager. “They add graphics to spreadsheets, use multimedia in presentations, and all of this consumes more disk space.”

To handle higher demands for capacity, the company regularly added more file servers, which was costly. The IT department’s management difficulties were also amplified by the need to maintain direct mapping between approximately 50,000 users and the physical file storage locations.

In the past, when a server ran out of space, administrators had to first determine if there

## Overview

### Industry

Financial Services

### Challenges

- Manage rapid growth of file server environment
- Streamline data migration processes
- Eliminate static storage mapping between clients and servers

### Solution

- Clustered F5 ARX6000 devices
- F5 migration and tiered storage policies

### Benefits

- Streamlined storage management tasks
- Reduced downtime
- Minimized storage costs

were files that could be deleted. If they had to move data over to a new file server, they were forced to re-map affected clients to the new location. It was a time-consuming and inefficient process that was repeated over and over again.

"Migration was a multi-step process for us," explains the company's GTI manager. "We had to take the files offline and copy everything to the new directory, change user profiles, re-map, and then check that everything was okay. The process could take as long as 12 hours, and that was far from ideal for our users.

"There are lots of challenges in managing a Windows environment," the GTI manager continued. "We wanted to control the growth of our file server environment and the number of vendors we had that environment, but we needed to break the one-to-one, person-to-file server linkage. By doing that, we knew we could deliver a better level of service to our users."

## Solution

The company decided that implementing a file virtualization solution would provide the flexibility it needed, so it deployed ARX®6000 file virtualization devices from F5. With the solution, the company eliminated static mapping from client devices to storage resources, giving the IT department the ability to easily move data in response to changes in its infrastructure.

"Before ARX, when one person ran out of space, everyone on the Windows file server was impacted," says the company's GTI manager. "Now, if a user runs out of space, that user is the only one affected and we can very easily provision more storage without any downtime."

This new data mobility has enabled the company to dramatically improve its data

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migration processes, which was especially important when the IT department began to consolidate its Windows-based servers to a new network-attached storage (NAS) environment. Now, the company employs a seamless migration methodology that enables IT to move files when the users are still accessing them, so downtime is never an issue.

The company has also taken advantage of ARX file virtualization technology to implement a storage tiering strategy. The IT department moves files from Tier 1 storage to an archive platform based on the age of each file, and is currently studying different information lifecycle management (ILM) policies to determine which policies will enable it to shift 80 percent of its files to the archival tier.

## Benefits

By implementing the F5 file virtualization solution, the financial services company streamlined its storage management tasks, reduced downtime for users, minimized storage costs, and is well positioned to seamlessly accommodate future storage growth.

### Streamlined storage management

Since implementing the ARX devices to regain control of its file server environment, the financial services company has seen

major improvements in IT management efficiency. "With the F5 solution, we can map storage to a larger file server or make whatever changes we need to make on the backend, and we never need to go back and change the user information," says the company's GTI manager. "That's a huge time-savings for us."

The time administrators save can now be spent on more strategic undertakings, such as virtualizing its server environment as part of the company's global file services strategy. It plans to realize even greater efficiencies and cost savings from reduced space and power requirements in its data centers.

### Reduced downtime

The company is also able to provide better service to its users. "File virtualization is a key component in our global file services strategy. Using F5 ARX has made us much more efficient, which allows us to deliver better support to our users." For instance, data migrations used to result in up to 12 hours of system downtime for users. With the F5 solution, users experience no downtime during migrations. In fact, during its migration to NAS, users had continuous, uninterrupted access to their data.

### Minimized storage costs

Using the F5 solution, the financial services company has implemented storage tiering and ILM strategies that reduce the company's infrastructure costs by improving the utilization of storage resources and reducing the need to buy more disk space.

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