



Customer Success Story

"F5 Acopia helped me keep my sanity because I don't have to keep begging my end-users to delete files that are inactive or not business-oriented."

—Senior Systems Administrator

Highlights

Industry

- Technology

Challenges

- NAS assets continuously hovering at 97% capacity
- Cost of maintaining data not always consistent with the business value of that data
- Data retention requirements varied by department, making it difficult to implement enterprise-wide policies

Solution

- Clustered F5 Acopia ARX500 devices
- Age- and modification-based policies automatically move data to appropriate storage tiers without impacting user access

Benefits

- Immediately reduced tier 1 utilization rates by 30%, with further reductions anticipated
- Eliminated the need to acquire new storage capacity
- Reduced storage costs by automatically moving non-critical data to lower cost storage
- Freed up IT staff resources

Leading Web Conferencing Firm Reclaims Tier 1 Capacity, Reduces Storage Costs with F5 Acopia

With more than 2 million registered users, this online web conferencing firm is the global leader in on-demand applications for collaborative business on the web. These applications enhance high-touch business processes, such as sales and training, with efficient web-touch interactions that facilitate both internal and external collaboration.

The Challenges

Rapid Data Growth Outpaces Storage Capacity and Drives Up Costs

After years of consistent business success, the company's storage infrastructure was stretched to its limits. Utilization on the company's main storage environment consistently approached 97%. The IT staff could relieve the situation, but only temporarily and only after a time-consuming process that included manually locating large files and imploring end-users to delete those files. Within days, utilization rates would shoot right back up.

In addition to placing pressure on IT, the utilization crunch raised significant concerns about the cost of storage, according to the firm's Senior Systems Administrator.

"The value of data to the end-user is always diminishing, but the cost of maintaining that data on Tier 1 storage does not change. I did not want to keep spending a lot of money for every byte of data that was idle but stored on expensive disk," the administrator recalled. "Searching for those files manually took too much time. We could not sustain that."

The company wanted to maximize capacity utilization and cost efficiencies without impacting users by automating the movement of data between tiers based on specific characteristics.

The Solution

Intelligent File Virtualization with F5 Acopia

The organization utilized existing but underutilized resources to create a multi-tiered storage environment with a high-performance system for tier 1, near-line storage for tier 2 and Windows-based servers for tier 3. This implementation enabled the company to move obsolete data to static storage medias. The company then virtualized its storage environment by deploying a clustered pair of Acopia ARX500 devices. The IT staff worked closely with the F5 Acopia implementation team to ensure that the tiered storage vision would become reality.

"They really are a world-class team," the administrator said. "They never hesitated on any of the challenges we faced and they were able to adapt to exactly what we wanted."

The company established data tiering policies based on file age and modification dates. Because certain departments require data to be retained longer, IT was able to establish multiple sets of guidelines to suit each department's requirements, while still meeting IT's goal of reclaiming tier 1 capacity.



When the policies were introduced, the results were dramatic.

“Before F5 Acopia, the best we could do is to bring the utilization to 85% - 93% of capacity, but a few days later it would be right back up to 95%,” the administrator said. “Immediately after Acopia, it dropped down to 70% and currently seems to have stabilized. However, we expect utilization rates to go down even more as we perfect the rules and policies.”

Users never noticed the transition and they continue to access their files as they always have, regardless of where the data is being stored.

The Results

Automated Storage Tiering and Reduced Costs

This firm is now reaping the benefits of its automated storage tiering strategy and plans to continue refining its data movement policies for even greater rewards. One thing the company does not plan to do, however, is purchase more tier 1 capacity, something the IT organization believes it would have been forced to do if F5 Acopia had not been implemented.

Using the Acopia intelligent file virtualization solution has helped this company:

- Eliminate the need for new storage by reclaiming over 30% of tier 1 capacity;
- Eliminate many labor-intensive manual processes, significantly lightening the burden on IT;
- Dramatically reduce the cost of storage by implementing automated tiering policies that ensure non-critical data is stored on less expensive servers.

Summary

Increased Storage Capacity and Cost Efficiency

Automated storage tiering with F5 Acopia has enabled the company to optimize its use of its tier 1 storage without limiting user access to files. In addition to reclaiming valuable tier 1 space for business-critical data, F5 Acopia allowed the firm to indefinitely delay the purchase of expensive new tier 1 storage capacity.

“By working with F5 Acopia we were able to fulfill our ILM vision. Files are moved automatically based on policies so our utilization rates are always right where we want them to be.”

—Senior Systems Administrator



F5 Networks, Inc.

41 Wellman Street
Lowell, MA 01851
(978) 513-2900 Voice
(978) 513-2990 Fax
www.f5.com
info@f5.com

F5 Networks Asia-Pacific

+65-6533-6103 Voice
+65-6533-6106 Fax
info.asia@f5.com

F5 Networks Ltd. Europe/Middle-East/Africa

+44 (0) 1932 582 000 Voice
+44 (0) 1932 582 001 Fax
emeainfo@f5.com

F5 Networks Japan K.K.

+81-3-5114-3200 Voice
+81-3-5114-3201 Fax
info@f5networks.co.jp