“All customers, regardless of size, are looking for enterprise features to effortlessly manage, protect, archive and maintain data assets throughout the lifecycle. So were we…. The Hitachi platform has everything we need to unite, manage and replicate storage.”

Chris Sator
Director, Data Center Solutions
FlexITy

FlexITy Solutions

INDUSTRY
Services: Technology Solutions Provider

SOLUTIONS
Virtualization, Enterprise Platform

Hardware — Hitachi Universal Storage Platform® VM (in addition to current Hitachi Adaptable Modular Storage 500)
Software — Hitachi Tiered Storage Manager, Hitachi Tuning Manager, Hitachi Universal Replicator
Services — Provided by Hitachi Data Systems Customer Service and Support
FlexITy Evolves Services Oriented Infrastructure with the Hitachi Universal Storage Platform® VM

FlexITy Solutions uses its highly progressive multimillion dollar interoperability lab to demonstrate next generation data center solutions to enterprise and midmarket customers. With a steady influx of new devices and technologies at the lab, managing the infrastructure was time consuming and complex. FlexITy implemented the Hitachi Universal Storage Platform VM to evolve its own environment and to provide customers with a deep inventory of advanced storage functionality, including virtualization and universal replication.

When it comes to understanding how sophisticated storage technology can support vital business operations, seeing is believing. FlexITy Solutions, a leading Canada-based technology solutions provider, uses its highly progressive lab to build and demonstrate proof-of-concept designs for an impressive roster of enterprise and midmarket customers. With a comprehensive portfolio of service-oriented infrastructure offerings, including managed and consultancy services, FlexITy helps clients orchestrate IT resources, processes and technologies to achieve better business performance and meet stringent data specifications. As advisors and builders of flexible IT infrastructures — thus the name FlexITy — the company stays focused on aligning business and technology.

Show and Sell: The Service Oriented Infrastructure

Showing customers how something works can go a long way toward configuring and selling the right solution. The FlexITy Interoperability and Testing (FIT) Lab is where it all happens. The over 6,000 square foot, purpose-built lab environment offers an extensive assortment of mission critical products in diverse environments, to explore new technologies and validate customer solutions.

A hallmark of the lab’s success is demonstrating to clients how to deliver IT resources and operational practices as well defined services, known at FlexITy as Service Oriented Infrastructure (SOI). This strategy for building a service, such as a database service or messaging service, requires several key steps. First, the customer’s key policies and roadmaps are identified, and then the right mix of components is placed into the design. Next, the service’s design and integral processes are tested, deployed and automated, at the lab first and later onsite.

“It’s hard for customers to crystallize a vision of a next generation data center if they’re mired in the daily pains of data migration and replication or storage utilization issues. The magic of demonstrating the SOI is being able to help customers understand how it relates to what they want to resolve, what they want to do. We decided to evolve our lab to better demonstrate the value of storage virtualization and universal replication, while also alleviating some of our own cumbersome storage tasks,” explains Director of Data Center Solutions at FlexITy, Chris Sator.

Search and Deploy: The Evolutionary Storage Platform

Unlike IT shops in most industries, where an investment is put in place to meet a three or five year IT plan, the FlexITy lab has a steady influx of new devices and technologies to assimilate and maintain. “Because we need to keep up with different equipment models and refresh trends that occur, we typically haven’t invested in a lot of storage capacity. But in order to have my staff building customer solutions rather than managing mundane storage duties, I wanted to find a storage

“Now, we don’t have to worry about taking our solution integration team members out of billable activities to migrate data. We use the Universal Storage Platform VM to set up various disk pools for quick migrations and just monitor it periodically. We’re so much more productive.”

Chris Sator
Director, Data Center Solutions
FlexITy
virtualization platform that transparently
moves and manages data across multiple
platforms,” says Sator.

Sator also wanted to be able to deploy stor-
age as a service to clients. Implementing a
highly flexible and durable storage virtualiza-
tion platform could meet internal storage
efficiency goals and improve virtualization
expertise while expanding FlexITy’s managed
storage services to customers. And while
some customers may already have bigger
tiered enterprise storage solutions, Sator has ob-
served that they might not be leveraging
all assets. This may be due to license restric-
tions of replicating data between storage
systems rather than across storage systems
based on its asset life, while leveraging thin
provisioning and universal replication.

“All customers, regardless of size, are looking
for enterprise features to effortlessly manage,
protect, archive and maintain data assets
throughout the lifecycle. So were we. From a
virtualization standpoint, the Hitachi Universal
Storage Platform VM has everything we need
to unite, manage and replicate storage for
FlexITy and for our clients. From a business
standpoint, we purchased the platform with
the greatest flexibility in maintaining an ever
changing demonstration lab at an excellent
price point,” Sator says.

**Universal Appeal: Hitachi Storage Virtualization**

The FIT Lab accommodates integrated solu-
tion demonstrations and proof-of-concept
environments, and it boasts everything from
biometric security controls to network simula-
tion tools. At the heart of the lab now sits the
Hitachi Universal Storage Platform VM.

Designed for complete virtualized storage
management across heterogeneous environ-
ments, the Universal Storage Platform VM
delivers enterprise-class performance for
controller-based virtualization, thin provision-
ing and universal replication in a modular
footprint. With nearly limitless virtual ports
available and up to 96PB of total storage
capacity, the Hitachi platform supports ex-
ceptional data mobility with highest levels of
availability and scalability.

“With the Universal Storage Platform VM, we
have a powerful instrument to unite storage
pools as one…. We can pool and allocate as
required and use the virtualization features to
support both mainframes and open systems
environments,” says Sator.

The Hitachi Universal Replicator software
uses one-to-many asynchronous data
replication to support storage connected
to the Universal Storage Platform VM and
copy data between devices, regardless of
operating system or protocols. Other Hitachi
management tools pitch in to simplify storage
tasks across the lab and reduce staff time
and effort. The Hitachi storage management
software suite uses a single management
interface for the entire virtualized pool of inter-
nal and externally attached storage.

For nondisruptive volume movement
between storage tiers and quicker storage
provisioning, Hitachi Tiered Storage Manager
enables easy identification, classification and
movement of volumes according to FlexITy’s
performance and availability application
requirements. “Tiered Storage Manager allows
us to transparently move data between de-
VICES without hassle, and match volumes to
defined characteristics without effort. What’s
more, Tiered Storage Manager is a catalyst
for having a service oriented framework for
storage,” Sator says.

**Out in Front: A Results Oriented Infrastructure**

With the Hitachi Universal Storage Platform
VM, FlexITy remains in the forefront of in-
novative technology offerings for its clients,
while trimming in-house costs and time. “We
demonstrate the versatility and functional-
ity of the Universal Storage Platform VM to
our clients, educating them about storage
virtualization and universal replication to help
them solve painful issues efficiently and cost-
effectively. At the same time, my staff is able
to accomplish much more in a day than ever
before,” says Sator.

**About FlexITy**

As a Hitachi TrueNorth Platinum
Channel Partner, FlexITy has
the following certifications and
capabilities:

- CSP Certified Partner
- HCP, HCI, HCA Certifications
- Certified Skills and Experience
  - Hitachi Command Suite software
  - Cisco and Brocade; SAN and
    WAAS/WAFS
  - Hitachi Enterprise and
    Modular Storage
  - Commvault Certified
    Professionals
  - Diligent Trained Professionals

FlexITy staff used to build demos and learn
new technologies after hours or over week-
ends in order to manage the fluid lab environ-
ment. “Now, we don’t have to worry about
taking guys out of billable activities to migrate
data. We use the Universal Storage Platform
VM to set up various disk pools for quick
migrations and just monitor it periodically. We’re
so much more productive,” he adds.