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Silvano Sardini
 IT Manager
 CLX Europe



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INDUSTRY

Services: E-business Communications and Publishing

SOLUTIONS

Modular Platform, Business Continuity

Hardware — Hitachi Adaptable Modular Storage 2100

Services — Solution development and installation services provided by Hitachi TrueNorth™ Partner ABS Computers

No Downtime for CLX Europe: Hitachi Modular Storage Upgrade Supports Online Services 24/7

To ensure its customers across Europe and Asia receive the online prepress, photography and digital information management solutions they need, CLX Europe opted to roll out a new database service. The high capacities and flexible configurations of this service required SAS and SATA disks for different types of archived data. Hitachi Adaptable Modular Storage 2100 met these requirements, allowing CLX Europe to upgrade its storage infrastructure to offer more flexible services while ensuring a good price-to-performance ratio.

CLX Europe Operations and Structure

In business for over 30 years, CLX Europe (www.clxeurope.it) has its head office in Verona, Italy, and serves 3 main market channels: catalogs, magazines and advertisements. The company has around 140 employees and an annual turnover of over 14 million euro. In addition to scanning, color retouching, image manipulation, page layout, proofing and other services, CLX Europe offers automated workflow solutions. It also offers a complete package of e-business services for prepress (CLXTools) and creative services using sophisticated scanning techniques, as well as conventional and hexachromatic separations for offset, rotogravure and flexographic printing. Excellent print quality

is guaranteed by analog proofing systems combined with the latest digital proofing and media asset management technology.

The Verona office has a highly structured IT system, which is subdivided into 3 main data centers with more than 60 physical servers, 6 of which are dedicated to virtualization platforms. For CLX Europe's business, the storage part of this system is the most important, in terms of both capacity and management; the company currently uses around 60TB of storage, and it comprises systems from various vendors. The many subsidiaries of CLX Europe, which has offices in Europe and Asia, use services provided by the head office for critical applications. Such services include image databases and email, which must be operational 24 hours a day to serve the different time zones.

The Challenge: Support High Capacities, Flexible Configurations

"The main aim was to set up a new database service with high capacities and flexible configurations; this required SAS and SATA disks for different types of archived data. In particular, we wanted a new storage solution that, in addition to the usual requirements of reliability and availability, also guaranteed a good price-to-performance ratio," explains IT Manager at CLX Europe, Silvano Sardini.

Hitachi Data Systems and Gateway Provide the Solution

Development of the project, which involved examining numerous solutions from different vendors, was entrusted to ABS Computers, a Verona-based systems integrator that has worked with CLX Europe for many years. ABS combined desktop computing products from Gateway with Hitachi Adaptable Modular Storage 2100 to create a winning solution that was eventually chosen and installed at the Verona office in September 2009: "Thanks to the excellent support provided by ABS Computers, the new system was up and running within a month and without any interruption of our services," Sardini stresses.



"We appreciated the inclusion of software licenses, which enabled us to avoid a significant recurring cost. What's more, the energy savings gained by the Hitachi AMS 2100 solutions compared to the previous systems have contributed to a rapid return on investment."

Silvano Sardini
IT Manager
CLX Europe

Some of the most important advantages offered by the solution, according to Sardini, were the technological aspects of AMS 2100; he highlights “the use of SAS architecture, the active-active dual controller configuration and high data availability, equivalent to 99.999%, which offer maximum data security even with remote installations.” This last point is extremely important for a company that has offices throughout the world. Furthermore, CLX Europe also valued the flexible architecture of AMS 2100; it is easy to use, allowing selection of different modular solutions to meet different requirements, and its innovative functionalities support creation of volumes and logic units based on data center configurations.

The Results: Transparent Transition, Performance Excellence

It should be emphasized that the switch to the new solution by Hitachi Data Systems and Gateway was completely transparent for CLX users: “Most of our services are provided online, which means we cannot afford to interrupt them when we install new systems,” Sardini points out. “Being able to perform all ‘hot’ installations is a major advantage of the AMS solution and meant there was no downtime or reduced functionality during the installation phase.”

But the advantages don’t stop there. “Performance is excellent, both in absolute terms and in terms of availability of the whole system — and for a lower price than that offered by competitors, whose solutions we examined in depth together with

ABS Computers,” Sardini continues. “We also appreciated the inclusion of software licenses, which enabled us to avoid a significant recurring cost. What’s more, the energy savings gained from the AMS 2100 solutions compared to the previous systems have contributed to a rapid return on investment.”

The benefits of the new storage platform were immediately clear, so much so that CLX Europe has decided to install another AMS 2100 at its Verona office. Furthermore, in June 2010, 2 AMS 2100 systems, each with a 15TB capacity configured redundantly, were installed at the subsidiary CLX Asia in Thailand. Over the coming months, the adoption of a new AMS 2300 system is scheduled at the Verona office to replace the current system. “In light of the excellent results obtained from the systems installed so far, we plan to upgrade the storage infrastructure at our offices in London, England, and Augsburg, Germany, with Hitachi Data Systems and Gateway solutions,” Sardini concludes.



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