



“Performance and reliability — this is what our customers demand of us. We apply the same principles to our storage! We would like a solution that is capable of supporting our performance requirements, our professional constraints, and our service commitments. With the Hitachi Adaptable Modular Storage 2100 solutions, we consider it done.”

*Eric Defaux
 Technical Manager DSI Distribution
 Neopost France*

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Neopost France

INDUSTRY Manufacturing, Retail, Services

SOLUTIONS [Modular Platform, Business Continuity](#)
Hardware — Hitachi Adaptable Modular Storage 2100 (2)
Software — Hitachi In-System Replication software bundle (includes Hitachi Copy-on-Write Snapshot and Hitachi ShadowImage® Replication software), Hitachi Device Manager and Hitachi TrueCopy® Synchronous software

Neopost Frees Itself from Storage Performance Problems with the Hitachi Adaptable Modular Storage 2100

Neopost France is Europe's leading supplier of mailroom equipment and logistics systems. There are significant constraints in terms of performance and volume requirements in such a professional context. Also, it is important to Neopost to provide its clients with excellent service and thus to guarantee continuous activity. To ensure its storage performance challenges are met, Neopost turned to the heightened availability and high performance of Hitachi Adaptable Modular Storage.

For more than 80 years, Neopost has devoted itself exclusively to mail management and processing. With sales of 140 million euros in 2007, Neopost operates with 730 partners (including MailServices), 13 sales offices and 16 service points. It is the only company on the market that provides a complete offer, encompassing the value chain for mail processing in France. Neopost France, which sells mail metering, document management and logistics systems, offers personalized solutions for mail management and processing, from letters to packages, to more than 100,000 clients (companies, administrations, professionals).

Neopost Priorities: Improve Performance, Absorb Data Growth, Meet Budgetary Constraints

Neopost has deployed one single organization and innovative technologies to pursue its primary objective: customer satisfaction. In order to support this objective, Neopost wanted to improve its data storage infrastructure even further. Responses to performance problems needed to be as efficient as possible, especially within the context of two of its critical applications: SAP packages and Siebel. It was also important to confront the exponential growth in volume, a problem Neopost's computing departments had been working on nonstop. The company needed a solution that would be progressive enough to be able to absorb

this growth while delivering the expected performance and falling in line with budgetary constraints.

"For us, the critical factor was to back up the SAP (350 users) and Siebel (750 users) applications, which are at the core of our sales activity. We had to do these backups while accounting for the numerous interfaces which exist for these two applications within the context of the disaster recovery plan," emphasized Technical Manager at DSI Distribution, Neopost France, Eric Defaux. "The cold backups done with the existing EMC systems almost systematically cause the backup operations to stop. We had to resolve this problem and be capable of doing hot backups for our critical SAP and Siebel applications, without using agents to compensate for problems caused by the interfaces."

Thus, for Neopost, the requirements were high:

- Make good use of a robust and reliable storage infrastructure to ensure the performances required within a critical professional context and to provide excellent customer service.
- Support the disaster recovery plan and guarantee service commitments (four hours).
- Make new investments long term by accounting for needs associated with the rapid increase in volume.



"Today, we can see concrete improvement in performance. We can calmly focus on the quality of computing services and contribute to Neopost's commitment to providing its clients with excellence."

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Neopost therefore consulted IBM, EMC and Hitachi Data Systems with specifications that integrated the different key problems with the aim of changing the existing storage systems. In addition to the fact that they no longer meet performance and volume needs, those systems had arrived at the end of the support contract and presented elevated maintenance costs.

The new Hitachi Adaptable Modular Storage 2000 family systems, which are equipped with innovative technologies like the symmetric active-active controllers, make possible to balance loads in an integrated and automated way. "It was a question of knowing if all of these new technologies, like the active-active controller or the SAS disks, were really going to support my production," Defaux explained. "I could assess Hitachi Data Systems' level of commitment and confirm the potential that its solutions presented when I visited the Hitachi storage system production center in Orléans (France). I was convinced and completely at ease."

The migration from the EMC Clarion CX 300 systems to the Hitachi Adaptable Modular Storage 2100 systems and the implementation of SAN connectivity using Brocade switches allowed Neopost to set up a new, faster and more reliable storage infrastructure with considerable advantages:

- Neopost completed its hot backups on SATA disks without constraints and gained two hours in backup time in comparison with the EMC storage systems.
- The real time for recovery within the context of the disaster recovery plan is 10 minutes.

- The new infrastructure supports availability of and access to critical SAP application information for the mail order service and factory.
- SAP is accessible six days a week, 24 hours a day. Partners can connect as early as 7:30 a.m. and SAP is no longer stopped.

Hitachi Solutions and AR Systèmes Expertise Ensure Performance for Neopost

AR Systèmes, a computer engineering services company that specializes in the infrastructure of information systems, recommended the new Hitachi Adaptable Modular Storage 2000 family storage systems. AR Systèmes, which has been a partner of Neopost's for several years, has great expertise in Hitachi Data Systems solutions, which has contributed to the success of this project.

The expertise of AR Systèmes and its knowledge of Neopost's computing environment played a key role within the context of migration. This actually required a Solaris update, patches and the development of a conversion script. "Storage environments are complex, especially when critical business applications have to be taken into account," explains Technical Director at AR Systèmes, Jean-Jacques Braud. "The difficulties we encountered with

the first migration were linked to different levels of the operating systems, but we quickly identified and treated the problem. From now on, the Solaris systems are all homogeneous and therefore also present fewer risks for future system developments."

"I had anticipated the scenario for this migration, but you can always expect the unexpected. This is how you measure your partner's know-how. AR Systèmes demonstrated its effectiveness and since then we've also been able to experience the robustness and reliability of the Hitachi solutions. Today, we can see concrete improvement in performance. We can calmly focus on the quality of computing services and contribute to Neopost's commitment to providing its clients with excellence," concluded Defaux.

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