



“Now our storage offerings are on the same par of excellence as everything else in our environment, enabling Peak to complete our zero-downtime Enterprise Managed Hosting and Private Cloud service.”

*Jeffrey Papen
CEO
Peak Web Hosting*



Peak Web Hosting

INDUSTRY

Services: Technology Service Providers

SOLUTIONS

Modular Platform, File and Content, Cloud

Hardware — Hitachi Content Platform, Hitachi Adaptable Modular Storage 2300 (Also in the environment: Hitachi Adaptable Modular Storage 2100, 2500)

Services — Provided by Hitachi Data Systems Credit Corporation and Hitachi Data Systems Pre-Sales Solution Engineering

Peak Web Hosting Deploys Hitachi Content Platform to Complete Enterprise Managed Services Offerings

Peak Web Hosting delivers enterprise IT solutions, but a gap existed within its portfolio of managed hosting services for long-term archival storage offerings. To orchestrate intricate multitenancy requirements and extensive scalability for compliant long-term intelligent object stores, Peak Web implemented Hitachi Content Platform. The platform's intelligent, content-focused object storage now simplifies archival management, security and compliance at Peak Web.

The market space for consumer cloud and managed IT services is increasingly crowded. Distinguished from these masses is Peak Web Hosting's zero-downtime suite of Enterprise Managed Hosting services. Best known for "managing everything but your code," Peak Web Hosting alone offers enterprise-level turnkey solutions for managed hosting services. These offerings are fully supported, "soup to nuts," by Peak's staff of engineers and guarantee zero downtime, even during maintenance windows. While competitors may promise best-of-breed services but promote consumer quality cloud infrastructure, only Peak Web, with enterprise class hardware, can guarantee data accessibility. Beyond hardware redundancy and system uptime,

Peak Web's commitment is to ensuring customer peace of mind when outsourcing the operational engineering and support for their applications and services.

With every Peak engineer averaging 14 years industry expertise and a fully 2N IT architecture Peak Web can easily support the direction its customers want to go; the company has developed over decades a seasoned nucleus of best practices for running 50,000-server architectures that quickly and flexibly scale to meet a wide range of requirements. From high performance computing and custom application environments to latency sensitive network and security-focused services, Peak Web has solved the barrage of enterprise managed service issues that customers face today.

Break the Code for Scalable Storage

While much of the Peak Web IT environment is state of the art, storage options have historically lagged behind. Peak Web identified limits to scaling storage within its own environment, relying mostly on direct attached storage to manage application data and minimize failures. "Our customers literally managed storage demands with JBODs (just a bunch of disks) and a lot of crossed fingers. To scale disk storage systems with those hardware constraints, our engineers had to copy data off a volume, break and rebuild that volume, reformat and then copy the data back. The whole time, the production environment would be down. This is no way to run an operation. I was confident in our data centers, our networks, our servers. But when we got into the JBOD world, there was simply no adequate software feature set around management, scaling and redundancy, and there was an absence of insight that problems were coming until something failed," shares Peak Web Hosting CEO Jeffrey Papen.

Additionally, one of Peak Web's larger customers was inquiring about ways to reliably manage and scale large volumes of stored data with ample I/O throughput, as well as 100% uptime redundancy requirements. A particular customer in the financial fraud detection vertical has many major-label



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clients of its own, each dictating a different retention policy and reporting requirements. According to Papen, his customer was paying exorbitant fees for a legacy tape-based archival storage solution from another vendor and was turning to Peak Web for something better.

“Unstructured data is difficult at best to manage. Add spiraling costs and legacy solutions, and, frankly, most enterprises are at a standstill for maintaining archives. It was clear that we needed to offer archive storage services but were hesitant to enter that arena because we hadn’t seen a suitable technology capable of handling our customers’ complex archival requirements. Discovering Hitachi Content Platform changed everything,” Papen says.

Achieve Intelligent Multitenancy with Hitachi Content Platform

Hitachi Content Platform is designed as an intelligent object store with massive scale, multiple storage tiers, secure multitenancy and configurable attributes, all within a single cluster. It is ideal for expertly managing the breadth of applications and requirements typical in modern enterprise data centers and distributed environments. Hitachi Content Platform 4.0 has exceptional granularity features that segregate and individually configure tenants (also known as virtual content platforms) and enable chargeback capabilities.

“Part of our previous reluctance to forge ahead with archiving was that other storage vendors cobbled together a mishmash of technologies, either bleeding edge or cumbersome. When we got specific about distributed intelligent object storage, such as managing metadata and compliance, encryption and “write once, read many” (WORM) compliance, the offerings fell apart pretty quickly. When we were introduced to the Hitachi Content Platform, we saw an elegant platform strategy that did everything we needed and proved to be easy to understand and scale,” explains Papen.

Peak Web installed Hitachi Content Platform 4.0, along with a Hitachi Adaptable Modular Storage 2300, in its Virginia data center, one of two primary data centers for the company. To support the archival implementation at Peak Web, the Hitachi Content Platform was configured entirely of 2TB SATA drives, with 160TB provisioned and 120TB usable capacity. The platform is currently supporting legal discovery, compliance, Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) practices and other business requirements for Peak Web clients. At the same time, it is minimizing costs and risks often associated with controlling data growth in managed IT environments.

Cut Dependence on Tape

During the presales process, Papen had discussed the diverse needs of his customer with the third-party tape storage. “One of the shining moments in our early review of the Hitachi Content Platform was being able to allay our client’s worries about moving away from tape media, managing numerous retention policies, and ensuring the necessary I/O throughput requirements. The Hitachi presales team amazed us by going to the client’s location, several states away, and demonstrating everything from namespaces, testing and file downloads to real world throughput expectations through the WAN to our Virginia facility. And this was before we had even signed a contract with Hitachi,” says Papen. What sealed the deal was the Hitachi “Tape Drive” emulation. This allowed Peak customers to use their existing backup software installation and seamlessly swap out legacy tape drives for the Hitachi Content Platform, without having to change any of their applications.

As a distributed object store, the Hitachi Content Platform uses advanced replication to protect content and ensure data is always in the correct physical location and instantly accessible, creating backup-free storage. In turn, a need for tape-based storage infrastructure goes away. “Anyone who has managed a tape library knows

how labor-intensive it can be, so no matter how you do the math, being able to manage petabytes of tape today would be highly inefficient. When you factor in the total cost of ownership for offsite third-party tape storage from services, such as Iron Mountain, the costs are simply astronomical. In sharp contrast, we don’t even need to dedicate a full-time person to managing the Hitachi Content Platform,” he explains.

Satisfy Diverse Requirements with Flexibility and Scalability

With Hitachi Content Platform as its object storage solution, Peak Web has eliminated the need to purchase static storage up front and has simplified how objects are handled and managed. “In the business of providing enterprise managed services, flexibility and scalability of the architecture are very important because we never know what a customer is going to need and when they are going to need it. Now we are able to combine thin provisioning and wide striping to effortlessly create all the LUNs we need, flexibly grow or shrink volumes on the fly with Hitachi’s disk pools, and support the IOPS requirements that our customer applications demand. The original head on our Hitachi Content Platform will scale to 330TB just by adding more trays and nodes on the front end, and without downtime for our clients. From day one, we’re saving on maintenance and staff cycles with the automation and no more worry about spindle counts and what might fail. When you combine all of this with Hitachi’s pre-emptive “call home” hardware failure monitoring and replacement software (Hi-Track® Remote Monitoring System), Peak delivers a storage platform unparalleled in the managed service industry,” says Papen.

For a company that offers turnkey solutions to its customers for enterprise managed services, Papen was quick to recognize the end-to-end continuity in the Hitachi Data Systems sales approach. “There are so many moving parts in storage and yet most vendors will drop off your hardware and drive away. That’s what

I call taillight support: when we needed our storage partner the most, all we saw were taillights. Hitachi Data Systems provided a whole solution, from quality products and an educational, consultative approach to very proactive support. The Hitachi sales engineering team took the time to understand Peak Web's critical needs and to transfer product knowledge to my staff. At the same time, the Hitachi Data Systems Credit Corporation offered helpful financing

options so that I didn't need to tap existing lines of credit that I use for growing other areas of my business architecture," he continues.

"The bottom line is that I have not one customer but hundreds, so I need to be confident in our solution. I know that with Hitachi Content Platform, it's going to stay up and it's going to work. From sales all the way through support, Hitachi Data Systems has given us turnkey treatment," Papen concludes.

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