

Hitachi Storage Solutions at Work

Insight Investment

INDUSTRY Finance

SOLUTIONS **Virtualization, Replication and Backup**
Hardware — Hitachi Universal Storage Platform® V
Software — Hitachi Tuning Manager and Hitachi Device Manager software
Services — Provided by Hitachi TrueNorth Channel Partner S3



“With Hitachi technology we’ve made the move to an enterprise system without any difficulty. The visibility we have gained of our data has enabled us to drive efficiencies throughout the organisation.”

*Peter Lethbridge
Head of IT
Insight Investment*



Insight Investment Manages Its Information Assets with Hitachi Storage Solutions

Market leading asset management company Insight Investment needed a more efficient, reliable IT infrastructure to allow the company to continue its period of successful growth. By virtualising its existing systems behind the Hitachi Universal Storage Platform® V with Hitachi software, the company has created an easy-to-manage, highly visible storage environment with unexpected performance benefits.

Established in 2002, Insight Investment has grown to become one of the largest asset management companies in the UK. As a specialist and innovator in its field, Insight designs investment solutions tailored to meet its clients' needs. As such, the company's IT systems handle a high volume of critical information throughout the day and high performance is essential to ensure that client transactions are handled as efficiently as possible.

Identifying Areas for Improvement

As part of the business's drive to continuously improve operational efficiency, Insight undertook an analysis of the entire IT infrastructure in early 2008. This was to measure the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and

threats facing the company's technology operation and its impact on the business. The analysis showed that Insight's storage infrastructure needed an overhaul in order to make the business more efficient.

Three specific challenges emerged in relation to the storage environment. The first was simply that the infrastructure was nearing end of life and the older machines were becoming less reliable. The expanding business also lacked capacity to grow, with the system frequently running at 80 percent utilisation or higher. For these reasons, capacity allocation was becoming increasingly difficult and the legacy midrange systems were unable to cope with different core applications and databases on the same storage system, leading to further inefficiencies.

Hitachi Data Systems Is The Vendor of Choice

Insight required a new way of dynamically allocating storage space where needed in order to avoid utilisation problems in the future, so Peter Lethbridge, the company's Head of IT, turned to trusted technology partner S3. Having worked with Insight for several years, S3 was able to help Insight address these needs and design a solution.

"As a vendor-independent provider, we fully analyse the business need and recommend the best fit solution on a case-by-case basis," said Mark Smith, Technical Director, S3. "Our deep understanding of Insight's business, based on years of designing information management solutions for them, meant that we quickly identified Hitachi Data Systems as the vendor of choice. The ease of virtualising the existing infrastructure via the Hitachi Universal Storage Platform V was the key factor in our recommendation."

Following S3's advice, Insight selected the Hitachi Universal Storage Platform V with Hitachi Dynamic Provisioning and 30 terabytes of capacity. This was deployed in the main data centre and Hitachi Device Manager and Hitachi Tuning Manager were installed to enable effective configuration and smarter monitoring of the new storage platform.

With the solution in place, installation and server migration were completed within three months and Insight was able to develop a tiered infrastructure around the Universal Storage Platform V.

"Tiering the storage infrastructure was key to ensuring our IT environment operated as efficiently as possible," said Lethbridge. "The Hitachi Universal Storage Platform V was selected specifically to not only store the data requiring high availability but also to provide a central platform behind which we could virtualise the existing systems."

Maximizing Investments

Hitachi Data Systems storage economics model was brought to bear to ensure that Insight Investment could reduce operating expense across a range of storage metrics going forward. While business critical information is allocated to the Universal Storage Platform V, the previous systems form tiers two and three, housing important but less frequently accessed data.

By virtualising the legacy infrastructure behind the new Hitachi systems, Insight was able to make use of their existing resources and so maximise the company's previous investments.



“We thought that the move from a modular to an enterprise environment would mean more complex management but the Hitachi system gives us great visibility of our data as well as being simple to administer.”

Peter Lethbridge
Head of IT
Insight Investment

This allowed the company to avoid replacing the entire infrastructure at significant cost and effectively allowed them to create two lower tiers of storage capacity without expenditure.

Lethbridge commented: “It was important to us that we didn't spend more than we needed to. While we were keen to deploy a best-in-class solution, we wanted to ensure we could be economical with our previous purchases, and S3 along with Hitachi Data Systems proactively suggested ways in which we could do this.”

Significant Performance Increases, Data Management Improvements

The new Hitachi storage solution has reinvigorated Insight's IT infrastructure, providing plenty of capacity for the company's continued growth along with significant performance improvements. Across the board, performance has increased by a third, with three hour batch processing tasks completed in two hours.

“We weren't expecting such an increase in performance. As far as we are concerned, taking into account the difference between this and the previous units, the Hitachi system has paid for itself already,” said Lethbridge.

The company's data management has also been improved by the thin provisioning capabilities of the Hitachi Dynamic Provisioning software. Its ability to efficiently partition capacity as and when needed means that multiple applications and databases can be run on the storage system efficiently. Use of the virtualized Universal Storage Platform V environment has resulted in greater visibility of Insight's data and resulted in a simple to manage system.

“A further benefit that became significant during installation was the lack of disruption the business experienced throughout the migration process,” commented Lethbridge. “Naturally, as a financial services company, we have to make sure employees and customers suffer as little as possible during infrastructure changes and this migration was completely invisible to the rest of the organisation.”

Empowering Insight's Future

With its IT infrastructure empowering Insight Investment to increase the efficiency of its business as well as allow for future growth, Insight Investment is prepared for the future but Lethbridge and his team have more plans.

The Universal Storage Platform V has provided Insight with a reliable and scalable platform for introducing a wealth of new technologies. Insights' infrastructure team is currently expanding its virtual server estate behind the

Universal Storage Platform V, which will enable even easier data management across tiers, allowing tactical performance increases on certain virtual machines.

“One thing we're now sure of is that we won't run out of capacity,” said Lethbridge. “The scalability of the Hitachi system means we can add additional space as and when the business demands it.”

About S3

S3 is one of the UK's leading private information management solution companies. Consistently, from its inception in 1988, it has jealously safeguarded its position as an independent vendor. Through a judicious choice of partners and an imaginative and innovative approach, S3 applies advanced technologies and creative thinking to the solution of complex business challenges for a diverse range of clients.

S3 has cross industry expertise that assists its clients' in achieving their service delivery objectives, enhancing their competitiveness and maximising their return on investment, whilst minimising risks and controlling costs. An extensive knowledge of sophisticated infrastructures means S3 provides end-to-end information management solutions that recognise each client's requirements regarding data availability and management, information security, business continuance, disaster recovery and investment protection.

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