

S U C C E S S S T O R Y

Hitachi Storage Solutions at Work

Vita Group

INDUSTRY Retail: Electronics and Telecommunications

SOLUTIONS **Storage Management/Virtualisation**
Hardware — Hitachi Adaptable Modular Storage 1000 (2)
Software — Hitachi TrueCopy® Synchronous remote replication software; storage and performance management software from Hitachi Data Systems
Services — Implementation services provided by Hitachi TrueNorth Channel Partner Corpnet



“Vita Group is growing fast and I simply don’t have time to worry about the reliability of my systems. The storage hardware from Hitachi Data Systems has enabled us to keep business momentum going. Its support has also allowed us to feel confident we have made the best storage decision to take us into the future.”

*Lex Moses
Chief Information Officer
Vita Group*



Hitachi Data Systems Storage Virtualisation Solution Provides Seamless Data Transfer and Green Benefits for Vita Group

As a new business operating three well known brands and managing data from 1,400 Australian employees, Vita Group experienced increasing difficulty managing its data storage needs. To simplify management, support the company's rapid growth and meet new compliance requirements, Vita Group turned to Hitachi Data Systems and Corpnet to develop a new architecture based on Hitachi Adaptable Modular Storage 1000 systems.

Lifestyle electronics and telecommunications retailer Vita Group operates three brands — Fone Zone, Next Byte and One Zero — along with selected Telstra Shop locations. Originally established in 1995 as Fone Zone, Vita Group was born in 2008 to more precisely express the expanding portfolio of brands previously managed by the Fone Zone Group. Vita Group's strategic plan is to broaden its brands' presence in the converging communication, computer and Internet markets. The company's future growth is directed toward providing products and services that complement its existing brand portfolio and make life more enjoyable for its five million plus recorded customers.

As Vita Group is a new business that operates three well known brands and administers data from 1,400 Australian employees, Chief

Operating Officer of Vita Group, Lex Moses, found managing the data storage needs of the company increasingly difficult.

While juggling multiple brands and burgeoning storage needs, the publicly listed company also faced a July 2008 deadline to meet a number of compliance requirements. This included the storage and exchange of structured databases, as well as unstructured data, including application data, operating systems and both partner and customer information.

"The sheer volume of data that we need to keep on customers is growing at a phenomenal rate," explained Moses. "We need to store Telstra and Apple Service contracts online for up to seven years. These documents need to be stored, as well as quickly and easily accessed."

Vita Group previously ran a standalone physical storage service on local disk. A number of servers had expansion disks, creating an increasingly difficult to manage, decentralised storage environment. Vita Group was continuously replacing its storage units with larger ones, reallocating old units across the company. With the company's rapid growth, this method was quickly becoming unmanageable.

Vita Group IT Manager John Cole was keen to implement a new storage system that would simplify management and support the company's rapid growth. With the company achieving double digit growth each year, sometimes nearly doubling in size, a storage system that could scale to meet Vita Group's needs was paramount.

The tender process was competitive, with Vita Group looking at all major storage vendors. Moses sought to implement a solution that would ease challenges associated with cost, business growth, power and cooling, and offer a rapid return on investment (ROI). Moses was also careful to ensure the solution offered a higher level of disaster recovery.

Hitachi Data Systems and Corpnet Deliver the Right Business Solution

The competitors quickly dropped out of the tender process, unable to meet Vita Group's diversified needs. After hearing about the stability of storage from Hitachi Data Systems from colleagues and businesses in similar markets, Moses selected the company as Vita Group's new storage provider.

Hitachi TrueNorth Channel Partner Corpnet developed the architecture for the tender, which included two Hitachi Adaptable Modular Storage 1000 systems with Brocade routers.

As the Hitachi Data Systems midrange storage line, the Hitachi Adaptable Modular Storage systems are the most scalable, high-performance, high availability systems in their class. These products boast high-end features previously associated only with large corporate sites — like the ability to optimise performance based on application requirements with cache portioning and advanced data protection with RAID-6 — accessible to small and mid-sized businesses, which have fast-growing data storage needs

and high availability and performance requirements in a small footprint.

The systems were implemented using a phased approach. First, Corpnet had to transfer Vita Group's data onto the storage area network (SAN), allowing them to bring disparate systems together onto one disk space. Corpnet was then able to implement their virtualisation and disaster recovery solution, providing Vita Group with a robust environment they could rely on for future growth of the organisation.



“Vita Group has not only decreased its power consumption in the server room by 30 to 40 percent, but it has also reduced its floor space requirements.”

Lex Moses
Chief Information Officer
Vita Group

After virtualising Vita Group's data storage, Corpnet was able to shut down the server and fire up disaster recovery smoothly. Previously during backup, Microsoft® Windows systems were heavily affected. The process would result in over three hours of downtime. This has now been reduced to just one hour, and Vita Group is even able to conduct multiple backups on the SAN daily. All Web backups previously took over an hour; this has been reduced to less than 30 minutes.

Because of the amount of planning and attention to detail by both Vita Group's IT System Department and Corpnet, the installation was carried out with no disruption to business, whatsoever.

Ease of Management and Reduced Total Cost of Ownership

With the right storage platform in place, Vita Group was able to consolidate from 22 physical servers down to just four by leveraging VMware Virtual Infrastructure technology. This consolidated approach to servers and storage has significantly reduced the management overheads and hardware maintenance costs of Vita Group's core infrastructure, reducing the total cost of ownership for the IT department.

Prior to implementing a consolidated infrastructure leveraging Hitachi storage, blade servers and VMware, if Vita Group ran out of capacity

or an application needed improved performance, it could involve weeks of planning, scheduled outages and new servers being purchased, provisioned and deployed.

Now, adding capacity or a new application or improving performance is a simple 30 minute nondisruptive task, whereby another blade is added or an additional drive tray is connected to the Hitachi storage system. This has dramatically simplified the management challenges previously associated with Vita Group's

growth whilst improving performance and availability of the business critical applications.

Risk Mitigation through Disaster Recovery

As a publicly listed company, risk mitigation with respect to the availability, recoverability and protection of their business critical data was a key requirement in Vita Group's vendor selection process. Hitachi Data Systems and Corpnet recommended a disaster recovery solution between Vita Group's primary Support Centre in Eagle Farm, Brisbane, to its disaster recovery site five kilometres away in Bowen Hills for all business-critical production data. Hitachi TrueCopy® Synchronous remote replication software facilitates this process. This replication of data means Vita Group is now far better protected from data loss caused by disasters and human error.

Greener IT, an Unexpected Yet Positive Benefit

Moses was also impressed with a number of unexpected benefits that came with the Hitachi storage hardware. Hitachi does not use mercury or lead in its hardware, resulting in minimal harmful waste when a unit is retired. By using VMware virtualisation software and Hitachi storage, Vita Group has not only decreased its

power consumption in the server room by 30 to 40 percent, but it has also reduced its floor space requirements. With these power and space savings, Vita Group has significantly reduced its costs as well as its carbon footprint.

About Corpnet

Hitachi Data Systems strategised closely with Hitachi TrueNorth Channel Partner Corpnet as well as Vita Group's own IT team to make the IT overhaul a success, with minimal impact on existing operations.

Headquartered in Brisbane, Australia, Corpnet provides business and technology solutions to enterprise clients throughout Australia. Corpnet takes a holistic approach to the delivery of technology-enabled business change, considering all facets of end users, business processes, information systems, applications and technology infrastructure. Corpnet was on hand to support Vita Group CIO Lex Moses and the Vita Group team during the planning, implementation and training process. With the expertise, flexibility and responsiveness of both Hitachi Data Systems and Corpnet, the Vita Group team was thoroughly supported throughout the entire process for a successful end result.

Plans for the Future

Vita Group deliberately purchased the Adaptable Modular Storage 1000 systems to allow plenty of headroom for high growth. The company currently has only deployed two of a possible 28 drive trays within the storage system and the Hitachi “pay as you grow” approach means that Vita Group can easily add additional drive trays as required to support the business.

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