



Interact for Health Guarantees Application Performance with Gridstore HyperConverged Appliance

Seamless storage growth, increased performance and availability at a fraction of the cost



Customer Overview

Since 1997, Interact for Health—an independent, nonprofit organization based in the Greater Cincinnati area of Ohio—has awarded grants to support health promotion programs designed to help both communities and the individuals living in them. Through education, advocacy and action, it has worked to improve the quality of life for people living throughout the 20-county service area it covers, through grants and charitable gifts of roughly \$9 million a year.

Interact for Health has helped launch school-based health centers that now provide 25,000 area students with access to care, made it easier for people with severe mental illnesses to obtain primary care, and helped start more than 60 evidence-based programs to treat people with severe mental illnesses and substance-use disorders.

Cliff Hastings, Interact for Health's Director of IT, commented: "These programs have succeeded because we don't just write checks. We get involved and encourage others to get involved as well. We teach advocacy, business planning, communications, data use and fundraising to ensure our grantees have the tools they need to succeed. We measure the effectiveness of the programs we support and conduct ongoing research to make sure we are addressing our community's evolving health needs."

Challenge: Finding an enterprise-class solution to seamlessly integrate and optimize applications

Interact for Health was at a crossroads with its IT infrastructure. It is preparing for a 300% growth in data storage requirements in the near term and its existing data center was due a major refresh as part of the organization's four-year plan.

Given its nonprofit status, Interact for Health has always focused on keeping the costs associated with its IT infrastructure to a minimum. Over the years it been able to take advantage of highly economical Microsoft product offerings which are available to nonprofits. The lack of license costs associated with Microsoft's virtualization platform Hyper-V meant that the organization was anxious not to have to migrate to another solution such as VMware.

Hastings continued: "My primary concern was to ensure that we kept the costs of any data center upgrade to a minimum. We have been running Hyper-V as our virtualization platform for a number of years, which has enabled us to grow and manage our storage, networking, desktop infrastructure and access, and security very effectively. But we faced a dual challenge—how to upgrade the existing infrastructure, while planning for future growth. Add into that mix the need to keep cost down I knew we needed a storage solution that was focused on Hyper-V."

INTERACT FOR HEALTH

Solution Highlights

- Move from Dell PowerVault to solution purpose-built for Microsoft Hyper-V
- 3-node, 9TB Gridstore HyperConverged Appliance for application performance and data growth
- Microsoft Windows Server and Hyper-V



Interact for Health, with its commitment to Microsoft data center technology and Hyper-V in particular, was therefore looking for systems that would seamlessly fit into—and optimize—its existing applications.

Solution: HyperConverged Appliance delivers seamless integration and ease of administration

According to Hastings, “I have always been an avid blog and forum fan, so I turned to the online community for advice. It was here that I heard about Gridstore and its HyperConverged Appliance.”

The Gridstore HCA is purpose-built for Hyper-V and Windows Servers, with a tight, native integration with the Microsoft environment. Its vController™ is a software driver that sits in the kernel of Windows, providing end-to-end control of I/O from server to storage. This optimizes the performance of each VM, and provide QoS on a per-VM basis.

“This tight integration with Hyper-V and Windows, I believed, would deliver a tested, certified and efficient solution for our Microsoft environment,” continued Hastings.

The Gridstore HCA is a simple, turnkey solution, tightly integrated with compute, storage, and storage networking with up to four nodes in a single 2U system. It can be expanded up to 256 nodes.

“Gridstore was engineered with Hyper-V in mind,” Hastings stated. “Being able to set quality of service at the VM level meant guaranteed performance for our applications. Even though the solution was all flash, it was very affordable. I compared the total of all the investments we had made in physical infrastructure over the past five years and the Gridstore installation was less.”

“Another point very important to us is the failover capability. I can lose an entire node or one disk in every node simultaneously and the VMs will keep running. Installation time was less than an hour and it’s very easy to administer. Working with Gridstore has been great and the HyperConverged Appliance is a winner for our organization.

Results: Gridstore delivers solid migration path to the cloud

Interact for Health has already realized a number of benefits since the installation of the Gridstore HCA in late 2014:

- Rapid installation and ease of administration
- Noticeable performance improvements
- Ability to manage QoS for each VM
- Migration path to the cloud now secured for the future
- Space and energy savings already being reported

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Cliff Hastings
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