University Data Centre Graduates to Highly-Scalable, Future-Proof Data Storage

• Nimble Storage's Flexibility and Efficiency Satisfies University of Bristol's Long-Term Storage Needs

The University of Bristol is steeped in history. Founded in 1876, it was the first English college to admit women and its pioneering work in solid-state physics in the 1920s and '30s led to the development of the transistor. Today, the University hosts 25 academic schools across six faculties, and its student body numbers around 20,000.

• New Needs Call for New Ideas

As the University's bandwidth requirements have grown, so has its IT budget. In an attempt to rein in costs while meeting the demands of its users, the University decided to consider hybrid storage, a system combining solid-state and hard-disk technology. Hybrid storage has a reputation for being faster as well as easier to manage than traditional hard-disk-only systems. The University's main concern was whether a hybrid system could easily scale up to meet its growing needs.

"We didn't want to put ourselves in the position of needing a forklift upgrade again in five years," said Sandra Stone, the University's Storage & Unix Team Leader. "We needed something scalable."

The University looked to its technology partner, Cristie Data, for an answer. After a thorough evaluation based on a detailed list of requirements, Cristie recommended Nimble Storage. "We could see that Nimble Storage had developed an entirely new approach that converges storage, data protection and disaster recovery into a single solution," said Stone.

Challenges

- Existing SAN infrastructure running out of capacity and suffering from loss in performance
- Did not want to forklift upgrade for the transition or in the future, so needed easy migration and optimum scalability
- Management of disparate solutions added complexity and cost

Solution

- Two CS460G arrays
- Scalable storage to 110TB, across two sites, utilising iSCSI controllers to reduce cost of connectivity from fibre
- Single management interface and proactive support via InfoSight™

Benefits

- No forklift upgrades in the future due to easy scalability
- High ROI on purchase of Nimble Storage freed up budget for other IT projects
- Fast, efficient deployment providing provisioning and support of storage
- Reliable redundancy built-in means less downtime

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Storage / Virtualisation
Backup / Recovery / Protection

"Nimble's Cache Accelerated Sequential Layout (CASL™) architecture was designed from the ground up to leverage
flash memory with high-capacity, low-RPM disk drives to provide high performance and redundancy levels at a low cost. It was exactly what we were looking for."

The University was also impressed by how easy the Nimble solution was to install. "The deployment took a few hours, as did learning the management tools," said Stone.

• The Nimble Storage Advantage

The University selected Nimble Storage as it offered an appealing combination of price and performance which scales simply and seamlessly. "The modular approach enables us to make simple adjustments to fit our exact performance and capacity needs at anytime," said Stone. "And it allows us to increase CPU, cache, space, and connectivity very simply."

A significant benefit has been Nimble Storage's iSCSI interface, which has allowed the University to decrease its dependence on more expensive fibre channel connections. Now, the University can offer its users higher input/output operations per second (IOPS) at a costeffective price.

The Nimble Storage system was not only easy to install but it can also be managed and maintained simply and effectively.

"We are delighted that we can manage the entire estate with one interface that I was able to pick up and use without training," said Stone. "And InfoSight, Nimble's innovative online management system, lets us identify issues early, long before they become problems."

• Conclusion

"We have found, since deploying Nimble Storage, that we can respond to user demands faster and easier, and without over-extending our resources," said Stone

• About Nimble Storage:

Nimble's flash storage solutions enable the consolidation of all workloads and eliminate storage silos by providing enterprises with significant improvements in application performance and storage capacity. At the same time, Nimble delivers superior data protection, while simplifying business operations and lowering costs. More than 9,000 enterprises, governments, and service providers have deployed Nimble's flash storage solutions across more than 50 countries. **www.nimblestorage.com**

• About Cristie Data

Cristie Data have been IT infrastructure and data management specialists for over 40 years. We take a consultative and platform agnostic approach to any customer project and advise on solutions that are best aligned to your businesses. **www.cristie.co.uk**