



CHAMBRE DES NOTAIRES DU QUÉBEC STREAMLINES STORAGE WITH vSAN



INDUSTRY

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION/
LEGAL SERVICES

LOCATION

MONTREAL, QUEBEC, CANADA

KEY CHALLENGES

- Improve the ease and speed of configuring new virtual desktops.
- Simplify infrastructure and storage management for IT staff.
- Assure data availability and improve future scalability.

SOLUTION

Chambre des notaires du Québec upgraded its traditional IBM SAN to a VMware vSAN environment. The organization deployed two vSAN clusters, including one for its VMware Horizon VDI environment.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Improved VDI provisioning and performance, freeing up IT time and resources
- Simplified management and use, allowing for a more balanced IT team
- Saved CA \$40,000 compared to the cost of upgrading the traditional SAN

As part of a data center refresh, Chambre des notaires du Québec upgraded its traditional IBM SAN to a VMware vSAN™ virtualized storage platform. The Chambre deployed two vSAN clusters, including one for its VMware Horizon® virtualized desktop infrastructure (VDI) environment. It is now easier for the Chambre's IT team to configure and deploy virtual desktops, and the solution has dramatically improved user performance and saved CA \$40,000 compared to upgrading the traditional SAN.

Chambre des notaires du Québec is a professional association with 4,000 members and more than 200 years of history. The organization's mission is to protect the Quebec public by supporting notarial practice that is grounded in public service, innovation, excellence, and access to justice. Notaries in Quebec are involved in real estate transactions, legal guardianship, and the drafting of other legal documents.

The Challenge

Chambre des notaires du Québec is an organization that uses the VMware vSphere® Enterprise Edition™ platform to virtualize all of its applications. The Chambre also uses the VMware vCenter Server® Standard™ solution and the VMware Horizon platform to deliver VDI with standard business applications to 175 internal employees.

The Chambre had been using a traditional IBM Storwize V7000 SAN that it separated into two logical environments. One supported the VMware Horizon VDI, and the second environment, with close to 200 virtual machines, supported corporate applications, training classes, and 50 traditional Web applications made available to Chambre members and employees via a secure portal.

Luc Phaneuf, Chef de service Infrastructure at Chambre des notaires du Québec, wasn't completely satisfied with the traditional SAN. For one, maintaining it required a specialized skill set. "I had only one team member with the skills to manage this environment, and I wanted something easier to manage so other team members could handle it," he says. Phaneuf also wanted to improve data availability. In the past, due to complex SAN misconfigurations, users couldn't always access their data.

“With VMware vSAN, it’s easier for team members with basic skills to configure and manage the system. Plus, having the vSAN in place helps us build apps and deploy systems faster than before.”

LUC PHANEUF
CHEF DE SERVICE INFRASTRUCTURE
CHAMBRE DES NOTAIRES DU QUÉBEC

VMWARE FOOTPRINT

- VMware vSphere Enterprise Edition 6.01
- VMware vSAN 6
- VMware Horizon
- VMware vCenter Server Standard
- VMware vRealize Operations Insight
- VMware User Environment Manager™
- VMware App Volumes™

APPLICATIONS VIRTUALIZED

- Standard business applications, including Microsoft Exchange, Microsoft SQL databases, Web servers, and Oracle databases
- Custom applications developed in-house

PLATFORM

- Standard business applications, including Microsoft Exchange, Microsoft SQL databases, Web servers, and Oracle databases
- Custom applications developed in-house

PARTNER

PCD Solutions

The Solution

Phaneuf considered getting a new traditional SAN, but then quickly began looking for new technology that could help the Chambre become more agile and deliver new services. Phaneuf investigated options from VMware and Nutanix, and then decided to attend the annual VMworld® user conference.

“My VMworld experience told me VMware is the future,” explains Phaneuf. Seeing demonstrations that showed the ease of use and maturity of the VMware vSAN offering convinced him, along with hearing from other satisfied users. “We compared functionality and concluded that for simplification and agility we needed to go with vSAN.”

After evaluating options from IBM and Cisco, Phaneuf chose HPE ProLiant DL380 Gen9 Servers, certified for VMware vSAN Ready Node server configurations. A priority on VDI performance called for a separate environment for the VDI, so PCD Solutions deployed two vSAN clusters. Both clusters are connected to the same HPE FlexFabric 5700 switches.

As part of the solution, the Chambre also upgraded its VMware Horizon licenses to Enterprise Edition and purchased 12 VMware vRealize® Operations Insight™ licenses for management tasks that span the two environments. “The servers and the switches are now all monitored by vRealize Operations Insight. We use it daily to predict, correct, and prevent problems,” explains Phaneuf.

The Chambre customized the HPE ProLiant DL380 Ready Nodes with dual sockets, 12 processors per socket, and 384GB of memory. For the regular infrastructure, it configured six DL380 servers with two disk groups, each composed of one 800GB solid-state drive (SSD) and seven 1.2TB SAS 10K drives. For the VDI environment, it configured four DL380 servers with two disk groups, each composed of one 400GB SSD and six 600GB SAS drives.

Business Results & Benefits

The Chambre’s new storage management solution has made its desktop and application environments faster, cheaper, and easier to maintain and grow.

Improved VDI Provisioning and Performance

“The new vSAN accelerated both the speed of provisioning desktops and the speed of user applications,” says Phaneuf. “On the first day it was deployed, VDI users were reporting a big improvement in performance.” Spinning up new VDI pools, reports François Rainville, Solutions Architect at PCD Solutions, “takes just seconds now. It’s just ridiculously quick.”

Simplified Management and Ease of Use

Phaneuf wants everyone on his small team to be able to manage the storage. “With VMware vSAN, it’s easier for team members with basic skills to configure and manage the system,” he explains. “Plus, having the vSAN in place helps us build apps and deploy systems faster.”

Saved More Than CA\$40,000 Over Traditional SAN

The new VMware vSAN solution was considerably cheaper than upgrading the traditional SAN. “Yes, the purchase was CA\$40,000 less,” says Phaneuf. “We also evaluated the administration and manageability of the technology, and additional savings accrue from the ease of use.”

Increased Data Availability and Scalability

Due to the simplicity of configuration and management, losing data availability due to the misconfigurations that plagued its traditional SAN are a thing of the past. The Chambre customized the vSAN Ready Nodes from HPE with only two-thirds of their disk space populated. If storage usage ever explodes, the Chambre can populate another third of each machine, allowing it to increase storage without necessarily adding compute resources.

Improved Ability to Predict and Resolve Problems

The solution improves the IT team's ability to predict, diagnose, and resolve problems, especially in the VDI environment. "vSAN has definitely helped la Chambre pick up problems before they happen, and the solution also allows them to know why something is wrong," says Rainville.

Looking Ahead

Phaneuf and team are now working on a rollout of the VMware User Environment Manager solution, with the goal of simplifying user profile and data management. They are also evaluating a simultaneous rollout of VMware App Volumes real-time application delivery, so that they can publish applications faster. In addition, the Chambre's IT team is looking into using VMware NSX® network virtualization and the VMware AirWatch® solution, with possible deployments in the next 12 to 24 months.

