Legacy Applications no Barrier to Successful Digital Transformation with Nutanix

CHALLENGE

The Kuwait Investment Company (KIC) had come to a crossroads in the development of its IT infrastructure with a datacenter comprising a mix of industry standard and legacy platforms all coming to their end of life. This was a situation that needed to be urgently resolved, as Tariq Al-Nasrallah, Senior Manager for KIC's Information Technology Department, explains.

"Maintaining and managing an ageing mix of platforms had become both challenging and time consuming. It was also preventing us from moving forward to take advantage of more modern software technologies and approaches. For the good of the business we urgently needed to either upgrade or replace much or all of what we had."

The need for virtualisation was seen as key here but, whatever the solution, it also needed to support the company's core banking application, then running under UNIX on an AIX system. Al-Nasrallah was also keen to upgrade the supporting Oracle database as part of the migration as well as simplifying storage management and bringing all of the company's IT resources together under one unified umbrella.

SOLUTION

A shortlist of just two vendors able to meet these requirements was drawn up. The KIC IT team then decided on the Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform running on the Intel Xeon processor E5 family following a successful proof of concept trial organized through specialist Kuwaiti partner, FutureTec.

"We had no real worries about virtualizing the Windows workloads," said KIC's IT Manager Robert Nelson, "but we did need to prove that we could move the core banking apps from our AIX system running UNIX to a Red Hat Linux server in a vSphere environment. This we managed early on during the Nutanix trial, as well as being able to gauge the performance gain which, even during the short time available, proved to be substantial."

"The Nutanix Enterprise Cloud platform has enabled us to migrate not just industry standard Windows servers but core legacy applications to a much more scal-able and easy to manage unified environment with greater scope for future development."

– Tariq Al-Nasrallah, Senior Manager, Information Technology Department, Kuwait Investment Company

Confident of the ability to achieve its digital transformation goals with the Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform, the order was placed for the hardware and the implementation began. Virtualization of the company's industry standard Windows servers was the first phase, enabling rapid migration of web, email, database, ERP and CRM servers to the new platform together with a number of custom in-house applications. This was then followed by the more challenging migration of the core banking applications to a virtualized Linux environment in phase two of the project. At this point the company also upgraded the supporting Oracle database software to further improve application performance and functionality, as well as switching from a custom front end to a browser-based GUI to bring the application fully into the 21st Century.

NUTANIX
Your Enterprise Cloud Platform

RESULTS

The Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform hosting both Windows and Linux workloads went fully live towards the end of 2016 and has more than lived up to expectations, most notably in terms of performance, as Al-Nasrallah confirms: "With the previous AIX platform we had to employ an entire extra IT support shift to oversee and manage necessary end of business processes. By slashing the time required to complete those processes from three and a half hours to just eighteen minutes [a 91% reduction] the Nutanix platform has enabled us to eliminate that entire shift and re-assign the staff involved to more productive tasks."

The Nutanix platform is built on the highly efficient Intel Xeon processors E5 family, specifically designed to provide more efficient virtualisation, smarter resource orchestration, and acceleration of critical workloads. The Nutanix software leverages and adds to these benefits enabling KIC to slash critical reporting times by up to 80% while also delivering significant performance gains across back-end applications hosted on Windows VMs.

Performance improvements, however, were far from the only benefits delivered by the project. With no need for the legacy hardware or a separate SAN infrastructure, rack population fell from three full cabinets to just one, with proportionate reductions in power and cooling overheads. The new infrastructure also offers far greater headroom to further develop and scale business-critical applications and, because compute and storage resources are configured and maintained under one console, the KIC datacenter is now far easier to manage.

"The previous infrastructure required a lot of manual effort to manage," explains Al-Nasrallah, "especially when it came to SAN storage which was both complex and time consuming to get right. With the Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform we can deploy new virtual machines and storage in minutes from the same interface across all of our platforms and applications – which was exactly what we were looking to achieve."

NEXT STEPS

Highly pleased with the results of the migration to the Nutanix platform, the KIC IT team is looking to further exploit what the technology has to offer. Limited by security concerns, the company does not currently make use of the public cloud but would like to take advantage of the instant scalability and enhanced availability features the technology affords in a more controlled environment.

The Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform solution running on the Intel Xeon processor E5 family has shown itself to deliver that environment, with plans already in place to use it to host a new online trading solution as the next step in the digital transformation of the Kuwait Investment Company and its business going forward.

Company
Established in 1961 as the first investment company in the region, the Kuwait Investment Company offers a full range of financial and investment products to a mix of corporate and private customers.

Industry
Investment banking and financial services

Business Need
Improve performance and simplify management of core business-critical applications across a mixed platform infrastructure

Solution
› Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform, built on the Intel Xeon processor E5 family

› Migration from Unix on AIX system to Linux on Nutanix x86 platform

› Virtualization of standard Windows Server as well as legacy banking applications

› Migration and upgrade of Oracle database

Benefits
› 91% reduction in end of business processing times

› 66% reduction in rack space

› Reduced power and cooling overheads

› Significant cost reductions in both capital expense and operational expense.

› Single pane of management for all compute and storage resources

› Single point of contact for service and support

NUTANIX™
Your Enterprise Cloud Platform

T. 855.NUTANIX (855.688.2649) | F. 408.916.4039
info@nutanix.com | www.nutanix.com | @nutanix