

Donating Storage to a Good Cause

Overview

Industry

- Nonprofit

Technology Challenges

- Aging Infrastructure
- Slow Network
- Needed more storage

Solution

- Network Attached Storage

Business Benefits

- Scalable
- Easy to use
- Easy to back up and restore
- Cost effective



CaringBridge is a Minnesota-based charitable nonprofit organization that provides free websites to connect family and friends during serious health events, care and recovery. Its mission is to bring together a global community of care, powered by the love of family and friends, in an easy, accessible and private way. CaringBridge saves time and energy by centralizing communication and easing the burden of updating everyone during a health event.

Capacity Is Key

With content hosting being central to the service offered by CaringBridge, having the storage capacity to support a growing network of users is crucial to the mission and long-term success of the organization. CaringBridge stores about 35,000 photos, journal entries and guestbook messages every day, which means that a robust storage platform is needed.

“We had a real storage problem,” said Gary Ablan, technology director, CaringBridge. “With more than 170,000 personal sites on the CaringBridge network and this figure continuing to grow every day, we needed to make a fundamental change to our storage infrastructure to be able to meet the needs of our users.”

Philanthropic Values

Evolving Solutions had been looking to partner with a charitable organization for a long time. “It was important to us to find a local organization that

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~ Sona Mehring, Executive Director, CaringBridge.

shared our ethical values and aligned with our philosophic beliefs,” said Jaime Gmach, president, Evolving Solutions. “We were also looking for an organization that would find substantial benefit from our deep technological expertise.”

When Jaime Gmach was introduced to CaringBridge executive director, Sona Mehring, he soon realized that he had found the organization he’d been looking for.

Evolving Solutions architected and donated a scalable, enterprise class storage solution which included integration, implementation, training and support services. The solution uses network file system (NFS) Internet protocol, which allows CaringBridge to easily transfer data across its network and connect with its disaster recovery location.

“CaringBridge needed a solution that would grow with them,” said Mike Keeler, professional services manager, Evolving Solutions. “We looked at various technology offerings and determined that an NFS based solution would be the best technology to meet their needs.”

Room to Grow

The CaringBridge network now has the flexibility to expand and users are able to upload their content without limitations on archiving and storage. CaringBridge does not have to worry about purchasing additional servers or another storage system; they can simply add new drawers to their NAS system as their storage needs grow.

“With over half a million people connecting via CaringBridge every day, it is imperative that they have the freedom to upload more content and photographs than what was previously available,” said Sona Mehring. “Thanks to Evolving Solutions, we no longer have to worry about storage capacity.”

“Evolving Solutions is thrilled to have played a role in the growth and continuity of such an important and worthwhile charity,” said Gmach. “We hope that this is just a stepping stone to the development of a long-term relationship with the CaringBridge organization.”

Solution Benefits

- **Scalable**

No limitations on capacity; the storage network will grow with CaringBridge

- **Easy to use**

No education was needed; CaringBridge staff already understood the network file system (NFS) protocol

- **Easy to back up and restore**

Ability to connect to the disaster recovery site without worrying about Internet protocol

- **Cost effective**

Leveraging the existing NFS infrastructure at CaringBridge avoided the high cost of switching to and maintaining a different kind of technology, such as fiber channel

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