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Achim Kaufmann
IT Infrastructure Team Leader
Josefs-Gesellschaft gGmbH



Migration from IBM storage servers to Fujitsu ETERNUS and simultaneously replacing 52 existing blade servers with 16 Fujitsu PRIMERGY CX Scale-out servers.

At a glance

Country: Germany
Industry: Non-profit, social organization
Founded: 1904
Website: jg-gruppe.de

Challenge

Migrating the entire server and storage system for healthcare applications, some of which are highly critical. Due to a scheduled change of supplier, a new, reliable provider was sought to meet the organization's high demands in terms of virtualization, decentralization, and high availability.

Solution

Rapid live migration to powerful FUJITSU Server PRIMERGY CX Scale-out systems in the customer's central data center, using two ETERNUS DX200 and one ETERNUS LT40.

Benefit

- Performance of ETERNUS storage systems
- Capacity of PRIMERGY Scale-out servers
- Flexibility because of optimized run-time behavior
- Reduction of maintenance window
- Seamless integration into existing VMware environment
- Lower energy costs, reduced waste heat, less space required in the data center
- Reduced workload for IT team
- Freeing up capacity for new projects



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Customer

"Putting people at the heart of what we do" is the guiding principle behind the daily work of Josefs-Gesellschaft. The non-profit, Catholic body, operating institutions for people with disabilities provides expert, tailored assistance to help people to help themselves. The organization also operates hospitals and retirement homes. More than 10,000 people make use of the extensive services provided by Josefs-Gesellschaft, ranging from accommodation, schools, professional training, and workshops, to medical treatment and healthcare.

Products and Services

- 2 x FUJITSU Storage ETERNUS DX200 each with around 30 TB net storage capacity (Storage Cluster, Extreme Cache Pool)
- 1 x FUJITSU Storage ETERNUS LT40
- 4 x Brocade ICX7750 and 4 x Brocade ICX7250
- 1 x FUJITSU Server PRIMERGY RX2540
- 6 x FUJITSU Server PRIMERGY CX400 Multi-Node Chassis
- 16 x FUJITSU Server PRIMERGY CX2550 Scale-out Systems
- Embedded Lifecycle Management (eLCM)
- FUJITSU Software ServerView Suite Integration Packs



The search for powerful servers

The data center at non-profit Josefs-Gesellschaft faced key challenges of providing the organization's 60 decentralized facilities across Germany with the necessary applications for wage and personnel administration, procurement, and access to documents from medical records. To carry out these critical operations, the IT department needs to have high-performing, highly available systems in place.

When the previous US service provider withdrew support for the server landscape at short notice, Achim Kaufmann, IT Infrastructure Team Leader at Josefs-Gesellschaft gGmbH, began the search for a new partner. Kaufmann looked at all the leading manufacturers, including the previous supplier. In the end, Fujitsu was chosen by the decision makers at Josefs-Gesellschaft, following intensive discussions and a visit to Fujitsu in Augsburg. "The combination of outstanding technical expertise and excellent communication was the deciding factor," says Kaufmann.

In practice, the system's power and performance are as important as having confidence in the partner's responsiveness and customer focus. "Some of our facilities operate 24/7 and need to access the system around the clock, to obtain care documentation for instance," says Kaufmann. When it comes to carrying out maintenance work and updates, the 16-strong team at the main data center in Cologne has extremely short maintenance windows for some of its customers.

Greater speed, more user-friendly, trouble-free operation

In terms of the storage solution, Kaufmann opted for the FUJITSU Storage ETERNUS DX200 system alongside an ETERNUS LT40 tape storage system. The ETERNUS DX range combines the benefits of Flash and conventional HDD storage, and offers the customer software options such as thin provisioning, automatic storage tiering, transparent-failover mechanisms, and sophisticated service management. The new storage technology developed and produced in Augsburg allowed Josefs-Gesellschaft to migrate its two previous storage systems – a faster "fast line" system and a slower, more cost-effective "slow line" system – to a single, powerful hybrid system. "With the new ETERNUS systems, we now have rapid storage," emphasizes Kaufmann.

Exploiting the features inherent in a Storage Cluster and an Extreme Cache Pool resulted in significant reductions in access and process times.

In addition, powerful, fast servers which are well-supported by the manufacturer were needed to replace the previous nodes.

The FUJITSU Server PRIMERGY CX2540 Scale-out Systems – deployed as VMware hosts – allowed Kaufmann to significantly reduce his server landscape while gaining more power at the same time. "We could consolidate substantially. In place of our previous 52 blade servers, we now have just 16 CX servers whirring away; eight per side in other words. Well, that's my ballpark figure anyway!" concludes Kaufmann. This has also resulted in fewer cooling fans, a reduction in waste heat, and less machine-space needed, thereby reducing energy costs.

Faster servers and faster communication

Fujitsu scored top marks after the online migration of the systems, which was done in conjunction with the system house SVA. "There was no downtime whatsoever," says Kaufmann. In respect of technical advantages, he stresses the gains in run-time behavior. Rather than having to wait for a host system to be free, as was previously the case, the PRIMERGY CX servers make light work of tasks. "Even if the machines are handling several applications in parallel, the host systems are usually freed-up within two minutes, allowing us to use them."

These short run-times and time savings are also advantageous when it comes to integrating new subsidiaries. Josefs-Gesellschaft is expanding all the time, and therefore needs to regularly integrate new organizations and sites into its network.

Gains in speed and user-friendliness result in a reduction in the IT team's workload, which is hugely beneficial in respect of new projects. "Everything is faster, and the time saved can be used to work on new software solutions," says Kaufmann.

Alongside the various technical advantages of ETERNUS storage systems and PRIMERGY CX servers, Kaufmann highlights a further benefit: collaborating with Fujitsu is smooth and uncompromisingly customer-focused. "If we had any queries, there were people we could contact directly at Fujitsu, right up to management level. We really appreciated this openness, and the fact that the products are manufactured in Germany, as well as the proximity of Fujitsu's Laboratory," says Kaufmann.

So much so that Josefs-Gesellschaft can certainly envisage future joint IT developments in the healthcare sector.

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