Case Study
GISA GmbH

"FUJITSU Storage ETERNUS DX has given us a simple, affordable infrastructure that can cope with all of our reliability requirements."

Dr Sven Reißig, Head of UNIX System Services, GSES Department, GISA GmbH

The customer

Country: Germany
Sector: IT service provider, predominately for energy suppliers
Founded in: 1993
Employees: 650+
Website: www.gisa.de

The challenge

GISA was looking for a cost-effective and automated solution to make the entire server and storage infrastructure highly reliable.

The solution

Realization of a transparent failover concept based on two FUJITSU Storage ETERNUS DX systems and Storage Cluster feature.

The customer

GISA GmbH is a SAP competence center which specializes in providing services for energy providers and municipal institutions. itelligence AG acquired a majority interest in the company in 2014.

GISA is a complete IT service provider for the energy industry and public clients and operates its own BSI-certified data center. As a multi-certified SAP partner, GISA is always up-to-date on the latest SAP applications and features. Its many certifications, including ISO 27001 and ISO/IEC 20000, demonstrate both its successful service management strategies and its commitment to providing highly reliable, efficient and secure IT services.

The challenge

GISA GmbH hosts business-critical applications for energy providers. In order to do this, it has to operate mirrored storage and server systems located in separate fire zones. When the company began designing the solution, the most important criterion was for it to be able to continue providing the applications with no interruption – even if one of the systems or even a whole fire zone should be subject to outages.

The solution

The Fujitsu ETERNUS DX online storage systems offers such functionality as standard, even for entry level systems of the size GISA envisaged.
The company chose to install two FUJITSU Storage ETERNUS DX200 systems. ETERNUS DX arrays offer the inherent ETERNUS Storage Cluster functionality, realizing the capability of transparent failover. This feature enables physical or virtualized servers to continue running uninterrupted in the event of an error so that applications remain available at all times. "We were very pleasantly surprised with the competent support we received in developing and implementing the new solution," says Dr Sven Reißig, Head of UNIX System Services at GISA. The installation happened extremely quickly. The order was placed in August 2014 and the system was up and running by the October. "Achieving such a feat with Fujitsu was a great experience," says Reißig, proudly.

Reißig has a tip for companies facing similar challenges: he suggests exploring the option of creating an asymmetric, high-availability configuration, for example using a DX200 and a smaller DX100, to further increase efficiency. "It depends on the situation, but it can save you a lot of money," he explains. Reißig was so pleased with the robustness and simplicity of the systems that he plans to replace another part of the IT landscape with Fujitsu systems in the near future.

The benefits

- Affordable, robust and easy to use solution
- Smooth integration of the new solution into the existing data center infrastructure
- Licensing costs are charged per system rather than by capacity, making cost planning simpler, easing GISA's future expansion

Products and services

- 2 x FUJITSU Storage ETERNUS DX200
- FUJITSU Storage ETERNUS SF Storage Cluster license software for transparent failover
- 48 months maintenance and support

The benefits

For Reißig, the benefits of the new solution are obvious: "ETERNUS DX has given us a simple, affordable infrastructure that can cope with all of our reliability requirements. Other manufacturers only offer this kind of functionality in more expensive mid-range or enterprise level solutions, and often only with additional hardware and software." As the transparent failover feature is implemented natively in the ETERNUS DX systems, additional virtualization instances are no longer needed. The Storage Cluster is both highly performant and clearly structured. This is particularly beneficial for the employees working with the solution day-to-day: "The simple structure of the Storage Cluster is an enormous benefit for our data center and has reduced our maintenance expenditure considerably," explains Reißig. As the transparent failover feature is automatic, the staff no longer have to intervene manually and risk causing additional errors themselves. Reißig has already run tests to see how the system would react in an emergency situation, and everything went exactly to plan. These tests will be repeated on an annual basis or after larger changes to the system.

The IT landscape at GISA GmbH is heterogeneous, so it was very important for the company to find a new failover solution that would be able to integrate server systems from a variety of manufacturers. "It was very easy and required very little effort," says Reißig. Another benefit he lists is the customer-friendly licensing model for the ETERNUS DX storage systems. The costs are calculated per system rather than by storage capacity. This means that Reißig can easily keep track of the costs. If more storage is required, he can simply add new drives to the existing systems without additional charges for the system software.

Conclusion

The transparent failover with Storage Cluster solution has been in use for over a year now and passed its emergency test with flying colors. GISA was particularly impressed with how easy it is to use. The company plans to expand the storage landscape further with additional Fujitsu systems in the near future.

"We had a really good experience with FUJITSU Storage ETERNUS DX, and we plan to continue using them in future projects."
Dr Sven Reißig, Head of UNIX System Services, GSES Department, GISA GmbH

Contact
FUJITSU Germany
E-Mail: cic@ts.fujitsu.com
Website: www.fujitsu.com/de
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