iTAREX IT ARCHITECTURE EXPERTS

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**Andreas Furtenbacher
CEO
iTAREX GmbH**

PRIMEFLEX for Storage Spaces Direct enables hosting specialist iTAREX to provide quick, flexible, cost-effective computing solutions.

At a glance
Country: Austria
Industry: IT services
Founded: 2010
Website: itarex.com

Challenge
Data center customers are demanding the highest performance possible for the lowest financial outlay. Within the industry, data center operators such as iTAREX face international competition from the likes of Google and Amazon.

Solution
iTAREX uses FUJITSU Integrated System PRIMEFLEX for Storage Spaces Direct to provide IT services to its customers hosted by Microsoft Storage Spaces Direct. This solution allows the data center operator to develop flexible, scalable and cost-effective services for its customers.

Benefit
- FUJITSU Integrated System PRIMEFLEX for Storage Spaces Direct is preconfigured and ready to use

- Component compatibility is no longer a concern for customers

- The solution is cost-effective

- Less noise and wasted heat

- It offers a range of infrastructure options and can be flexibly scaled

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Customer

iTAREX specializes in providing consulting services for customers with more than 50 PC workstations who have increased security requirements and have a heightened awareness of data security. The Austrian company offers modern, reliable, and flexible IT solutions, allowing the rapid implementation of customer requirements and enabling the company to react to technological changes in the market. Customers are supported at every stage of the IT life cycle – from analysis and planning stages through implementation, initial set-up, maintenance, and process optimization.

Products and services

- FUJITSU Integrated System PRIMEFLEX for Storage Spaces Direct
- FUJITSU Server PRIMERGY RX 2540 + JX 40
- FUJITSU Server PRIMERGY RX 2540 Backup

Data center operators face tough competition

iTAREX operates a data center hosting its customers' applications. Its services range from operating Microsoft Office environments for companies without their own IT departments, right through to solutions for large businesses which outsource sensitive, security-critical applications to the iTAREX data center. There is tough competition in this area: "We are automatically compared with providers like Google and Amazon. The challenge was to meet our customers' demands that everything should be both increasingly cheaper as well as faster. We were unable to do this by deploying traditional systems," says Andreas Furtenbacher, CEO, iTAREX. In addition, iTAREX offers solutions based on terminal servers. The IT system had reached its limits: "Terminal servers need very high-performing hard disks. We realized that our traditional storage system was too slow for that," explains Furtenbacher. It was therefore obvious to him that he needed to look towards Microsoft's new Storage Spaces Direct solution. Fujitsu reacted very quickly to this expansion of the Microsoft Windows Server operating system at the end of 2016. This made the Austrian company one of the first users in Europe to implement a corresponding solution and therefore gain a valuable advantage over its competition.

Fujitsu's product portfolio allows a wide range of different versions

iTAREX moved its entire data center IT operation to Storage Spaces Direct. With Storage Spaces, Microsoft introduced virtual storage that can be distributed across several different physical storage devices for the first time. Administrators can scale the storage space easily. These capabilities have been further expanded by Windows Server 2016. The new version of the operating system enables the creation of a storage cluster using the physical hard disks of several servers. iTAREX was able to deploy this technology quickly, thereby gaining a significant advantage thanks to this close collaboration with Fujitsu. Furthermore, due to the complete hardware range of servers and storage versions, Fujitsu came into its own when moving the data center over to the new technology. "With Fujitsu, we are extremely flexible. This applies to the various server versions and configuration levels, but also for individual components such as the hard disks. These tend to be more quickly available from Fujitsu than from other manufacturers. Moreover, in our experience, the products are stable and work really well. There has been very little downtime with the products that we've deployed up to now," explains Furtenbacher.

Pre-configuration for Storage Spaces Direct reduces the financial burden for customers

For Furtenbacher, there are obvious huge advantages to the PRIMEFLEX solution for Microsoft Storage Spaces Direct and he has concrete figures to back this up: "For us, PRIMEFLEX for Storage Spaces Direct is around 30 percent more cost-effective when compared with normal virtual hardware and traditional storage solutions." What is more, only a quarter of the available server storage capacity is currently being used, according to Furtenbacher. He happily admits that the true savings are yet to come. "I can expand our hard disk capacity for a fraction of the normal costs. The hard disks are all I need to buy to do this; I already have everything else that we need." According to Furtenbacher, the costs of the first purchase are a third lower. This increases to a reduction of 50 percent or more when it comes to expanding the storage solution. In terms of throughput, the new system significantly outdoes his previous IT system: "With our previous system, we had 30,000 IOPs, whereas we now have 2 million IOPs."

iTAREX put its faith into Microsoft Storage Spaces Direct technology at an early stage, pioneering its use before the preconfigured solution had come into existence. Together with the team from Fujitsu, Furtenbacher worked on customizing PRIMEFLEX for Storage Spaces Direct to the individual needs of customers, thereby creating an optimized solution for iTAREX's operations. This has made everything much easier. "You can simply switch the solution on and it works," says Furtenbacher. The solution has won him over. Compared with traditional storage, it allows him to use more affordable components and higher-performing storage at lower prices, opening up direct opportunities for creating new business. Up to now, he has sometimes had to put off those customers with a terminal server connection. "We are now in a position to rapidly expand this side of the business. The applications run without latency and we are able to guarantee a better quality of service to our customers."

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