

Hitachi Storage Solutions at Work

FlexlTy Solutions

INDUSTRY Services: Technology Solutions Provider

SOLUTIONS Virtualization

Hardware — Hitachi Universal Storage Platform™ VM (in addition to current Hitachi Adaptable Modular Storage 500)

Software — Hitachi Tiered Storage Manager, Hitachi Tuning Manager and Hitachi Universal Replicator software

Service — Provided by Hitachi Data Systems Customer Service and Support



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*Chris Sator
Director, Data Center Solutions
FlexlTy*

FlexITy Evolves Services Oriented Infrastructure with the Hitachi Universal Storage Platform™ VM

FlexITy Solutions uses its highly progressive multi-million dollar interoperability lab to demonstrate next generation data center solutions to enterprise and midmarket customers. With a steady influx of new devices and technologies at the lab, managing the infrastructure was time consuming and complex. FlexITy implemented the Hitachi Universal Storage Platform™ VM to evolve its own environment and to provide customers with a deep inventory of advanced storage functionality, including virtualization and universal replication.

When it comes to understanding how sophisticated storage technology can support vital business operations, seeing is believing.

FlexITy Solutions, a leading Canadian-based technology solutions provider, uses its highly progressive lab to build and demonstrate proof-of-concept designs for an impressive roster of enterprise and midmarket customers. With a comprehensive portfolio of service-oriented infrastructure offerings including managed and consultancy services, FlexITy helps clients orchestrate IT resources, processes and technologies to achieve better business performance and meet stringent data specifications. As advisors and builders of flexible IT infrastructures — thus the name

FlexITy — the company stays focused on aligning business and technology.

Show and Sell: Demonstrating Service Oriented Infrastructure

Showing customers how something works can go a long way toward configuring and selling the right solution. The FlexITy Interoperability and Testing (FIT) Lab is where it all happens. The over 6,000 square foot, purpose-built lab environment offers an extensive assortment of mission critical products in diverse environments, to explore new technologies and validate customer solutions.

A hallmark of the lab's success is demonstrating to clients how to deliver IT resources

and operational practices as well defined services, known at FlexITy as Service Oriented Infrastructure (SOI). This strategy for building a service, such as a database service or messaging service, requires several key steps. First, the customer's key policies and road maps are identified, and then the right mix of components is placed into the design. Next, the service's design and integral processes are tested, deployed and automated at the lab first and later onsite.

"It's hard for customers to crystallize a vision of a next generation data center if they're mired in the daily pains of data migration and replication or storage utilization issues. The magic of demonstrating the SOI is being able to help customers understand how it relates to what they want to resolve, what they want to do. We decided to evolve our lab to better demonstrate the value of storage virtualization and universal replication, while also alleviating some of our own cumbersome storage tasks," explains Director of Data Center Solutions at FlexITy, Chris Sator.

Search and Deploy: Finding an Evolutionary Storage Platform

Unlike IT shops in most industries, where an investment is put in place to meet a three or five year IT plan, the FlexITy lab has a steady influx of new devices and technologies to assimilate and maintain. "Because we need to keep up with different equipment models and refresh trends that occur, we typically haven't invested in a lot of storage capacity. But in order to have my staff building customer solutions rather than managing mundane storage duties, I wanted to find a storage virtualization platform that transparently moves and manages data across multiple platforms," says Sator.

Sator also wanted to be able to deploy storage as a service to clients. Implementing a highly flexible and durable storage virtualization platform could meet internal storage efficiency goals and improve virtualization expertise while expanding FlexITy's managed storage services to customers. And while some customers, may already have bigger enterprise storage solutions, Sator has observed that they might

not be leveraging all assets due to license restrictions of replicating data between storage systems rather than across storage systems based on its asset life, while leveraging thin provisioning and universal replication.

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Director, Data Center Solutions
FlexITy

a virtualization standpoint, the Hitachi Universal Storage Platform VM has everything we need to unite, manage and replicate storage for FlexITy and for our clients. From a business standpoint, we purchased the platform with the greatest flexibility in maintaining an ever changing demonstration lab at an excellent price point,” Sator says.

Universal Appeal: Leveraging Hitachi Storage Virtualization

The FIT Lab accommodates integrated solution demonstrations and proof-of-concept environments, and boasts everything from biometric security controls to network simulation tools. At the heart of the lab now sits the Hitachi Universal Storage Platform VM.

Designed for complete virtualized storage management across heterogeneous environments, the Universal Storage Platform VM delivers enterprise-class performance for controller-based virtualization, thin provisioning and universal replication in a modular footprint. With nearly limitless virtual ports available and up to 96PB of total storage capacity, the Hitachi platform supports exceptional data mobility with highest levels of availability and scalability.

“With the Universal Storage Platform VM, we have a powerful instrument to unite storage pools as one.... We can pool and allocate as required and use the virtualization features to

support both mainframes and open systems environments,” says Sator.

The Hitachi Universal Replicator software uses one-to-many asynchronous data replication to support storage connected to the Universal Storage Platform VM and copy data between devices, regardless of operating system or protocols. Other Hitachi management tools pitch in to simplify storage tasks across the

lab and reduce staff time and effort. The Hitachi storage management software suite uses a single management interface for the entire virtualized pool of internal and externally attached storage.

For nondisruptive volume movement between storage tiers and quicker storage provisioning, Hitachi Tiered Storage Manager enables easy identification, classification and movement of volumes according to FlexITy’s performance and availability application requirements.

“Tiered Storage Manager allows us to transparently move data between devices without hassle, and match volumes to defined characteristics without effort. What’s more, Tiered Storage Manager is a catalyst for having a service oriented framework for storage,” Sator says.

Out in Front: Building Results Oriented Infrastructure

With the Hitachi Universal Storage Platform VM, FlexITy remains in the forefront of innovative technology offerings for its clients, while trimming in-house costs and time. “We demonstrate the versatility and functionality of the Universal Storage Platform VM to our clients, educating them about storage virtualization and universal replication to help them solve painful issues efficiently and cost-effectively. At the same time, my staff is able to accomplish much more in a day than ever before,” says Sator.

FlexITy staff used to build demos and learn new technologies after hours or over weekends in order to manage the fluid lab environment. “Now, we don’t have to worry about taking guys out of billable activities to migrate data. We use the Universal Storage Platform VM to set up various disk pools for quick migrations and just monitor it periodically. We’re so much more productive,” he adds.

About FlexITy

As a Hitachi TrueNorth Platinum Channel Partner, FlexITy has the following certifications and capabilities:

- CSP Certified Partner
- HCP, HCI, HCA Certifications
- Certified Skills and Experience
 - Hitachi Storage Command Suite software
 - Cisco and Brocade; SAN and WAAS/WAFS
 - Hitachi Enterprise and Modular Storage
 - Commvault Certified Professionals
 - Diligent Trained Professionals

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