



## OLM GROUP IMPROVES SOCIAL CARE WITH THE COMPELLENT SAN



Based in London, OLM Group has a track record of providing skilled support to help local authorities personalize their approach to children's and adult services. OLM's suite of software tools helps its clients – including more than 85 local authorities across the country – deliver services to the most vulnerable members of society. Its flagship product is the UK's leading case

management system for child and adult services, and its reach embraces more than 40 per cent of the UK population.

As a growing organisation, OLM faces year-on-year data growth of around 35 per cent. However, the company's previous storage area network (SAN) was close to full capacity and was not flexible enough to allow further expansion or scaling. OLM decided to replace its storage infrastructure with a state-of-the-art enterprise storage solution that could be integrated with VMware's virtual server platform and expanded on demand.

After evaluating a number of leading products from vendors including EMC and HP, OLM chose to implement a Compellent SAN. "Aside from VMware integration, our other buying criteria were ease of use, flexibility for future growth and return on investment. Compellent won in all four areas," said Jason Clarke, Network Services Manager at OLM.

## POWERING SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT WITH SERVER AND STORAGE VIRTUALISATION

Proven VMware compatibility was the number one criteria for OLM, as the IT team had already successfully deployed VMware's virtual server platform across its test and development environments. As a result, OLM had benefitted from faster deployment, excellent resource management and improved asset utilisation, and the company was keen to extend these benefits into its storage infrastructure.

Adding the Compellent SAN to VMware has not only extended these benefits but has yielded additional cost savings as well. For example, running Windows Server Datacenter Edition on each of its four VMware ESX host servers allows OLM to host unlimited Windows Server virtual machines on each box. Even with the cost of the ESX licenses, OLM still saves £21,500 in license fees alone.

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JASON CLARKE  
Network Services Manager  
OLM

## RESULTS REPORTED BY OLM

- » Virtualisation with Compellent and VMware saves £21,500 in license fees alone
- » Ease of use means LUN can be set up in a few minutes instead of half an hour
- » Automated Tiered Storage migrates infrequently accessed data to lower cost drives without manual intervention
- » Thin Provisioning eases capacity planning by only utilising physical capacity when data is actually written

## OPERATING SYSTEMS

- » Windows Server 2003
- » Sun Solaris

## KEY APPLICATIONS

- » Microsoft Exchange
- » Microsoft Office Sharepoint Server
- » VMware ESX
- » Oracle
- » Coldfusion
- » Java

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## FAST TRACK DRIVES SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE

For OLM's software team, performance is crucial to continued product development. Compellent's Fast Track technology works in combination with Data Progression to place the most frequently used data on the fastest outer tracks of each drive.

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"Fast Track can give us even more of a performance boost. We aim to host production databases, Exchange data, email archiving and VDI leveraging both the increased performance as well as the key features of the Compellent SAN."

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concluded Clarke. "I can also safely say that Compellent's SAN is the easiest, yet most intelligent SAN I have ever used."

## EASE OF USE ALLOWS OVER-LOADED IT TEAM TO MANAGE STORAGE IN MINUTES

OLM's small IT team did not have extra time or resources to spend learning complex new operating systems or programme commands, and it could not allocate large amounts of time to ongoing SAN management in the future. Compellent Storage Center's point and click interface has been ideal, because it enables Clarke and his team to provision storage resources at a much faster rate than was previously possible.

With Compellent, OLM can set up a LUN and make it visible to the correct servers in a few minutes; in contrast, this used to take almost half an hour on the company's old SAN with its complex command-line interface. "The web interface also means the Compellent SAN can be managed from anywhere. In the past, we had to unlock the server room, find the console cable and plug it into the front of the SAN to manage it – not the most user-friendly way of working," Clarke explained. "Perhaps the best part about Compellent's ease of use is that we did not need to add extra staff to manage our expanding storage and saved on training when compared to a less intuitive solution."

## AUTOMATED TIERED STORAGE IS IDEAL FOR DEVELOPMENT

Compellent's SAN has provided OLM with a common-sense approach to disk drive allocation. As is the case with most organisations, the majority of OLM's data is not accessed on a regular basis. In a traditional SAN environment, all this data would have to be stored on the same high speed, high cost Fibre Channel drives unless the IT team manually moved less frequently accessed data to a lower cost storage option and then manually moved it back if it were required at a later date.

Compellent's unique Automated Tiered Storage software migrates infrequently accessed blocks of data to the lower cost drives without manual intervention, and then it moves the data back to the Fibre Channel disks when access is requested across the network. This technology has allowed OLM to architect its Compellent SAN with 30 per cent Fibre Channel disks for frequently accessed data and 70 per cent less expensive, high-capacity SATA disks for inactive data.

Clarke explained: "Some of the system development environments are accessed less than once a month. Compellent's Data Progression function automatically shifts the inactive data down to the less expensive tier of storage, where it is still quickly available to developers. If at a later date, the data starts to be accessed on a more frequent basis, it will be moved back up to the highest speed drives without any storage administrator involvement."

## MODULAR DESIGN PROVIDES FLEXIBILITY FOR FUTURE GROWTH, DISASTER RECOVERY

Compellent's modular architecture scales easily without any downtime, preparing OLM for future growth. In addition, Compellent's Thin Provisioning only utilizes physical capacity when data is written, making capacity planning easier for OLM's IT team. "These days, increasing capacity is just a matter of purchasing more disks and adding them on the fly," stated Clarke. "And the advanced reporting tools in Enterprise Manager mean you don't need to worry about the SAN reaching capacity without you noticing."

This flexibility also extends to adding future functionality. OLM has plans to add disaster recovery capability in the near future. Clarke explained: "We are considering placing another Compellent SAN at another site. We could then replicate all our core systems to it so that, should our main site go up in smoke, it's just a matter of redirecting network paths to the backup site."