

GE FABBRI Adopts Virtualization for a Global Publishing Empire

A Unique Industry

GE FABBRI is a leading UK-based, partwork publisher. Partwork publications – an industry unique to the UK – are a series of magazines issued around a particular topic or fictional story and can additionally include DVDs or other multi-media items that accompany the series, such as collectable models. Each series has a finite end and packaging is provided to save the set for collecting or safekeeping. In the UK, the partworks industry represents the fourth-largest selling magazine market.

Strategic Reevaluation

GE FABBRI publishes over 700 titles a year and distributes them across 39 countries. Kevin Taylor is the IT Manager and, with few resources in his department, he was facing a constant challenge to ensure that all the company's data was easily and continuously, available to the entire publishing and administrative staff across the company.

When it was time to upgrade the SAN and reevaluate disaster recovery strategies, Taylor made the decision to virtualize all of the Windows servers and find the right storage partner to support virtualization, increase performance and receive the maximum “bang for the buck” within the SAN.

Enable Virtualization and Eliminate Downtime

After evaluating several storage vendor solutions, Taylor chose XioTech's Intelligent Storage Element (ISE) technology, a tightly integrated storage environment that is purpose-built to maximize reliability and performance. Taylor is also leveraging CorteX, XioTech's storage API; it allows control of ISE and gathering information from ISE. CorteX is a RESTful (Representational State Transfer) service running directly on ISE to provide the best balance of capability and simplicity.

Jcom, a valued XioTech partner in the UK, created the overall architecture and worked with Taylor on the deployment to ensure a seamless move to virtualization.

Leveraging XioTech's ISE Storage Blades, Taylor is able to create huge storage pools on sealed DataPacs rather than individual disk drives. Each ISE houses up to two DataPacs, which provide the processing power of 20 to 40 disk drives in just 3U of vertical rack space. Additionally, Taylor is running DataCore Software alongside the ISE to support the virtualized environment.

GE FABBRI IT Environment

Industry

- Publishing

Location

- London, UK

Requirements

- Resource optimization
- Continuous availability
- Minimal maintenance

XioTech Solution

- ISE Storage Blades
- CorteX API

Applications

- Microsoft Exchange
- SAP
- Active Directory
- SQL
- GoPublish
- BES Server

Operating systems

- Windows
- Mac OSX
- Citrix XenServer

Benefits

- Increased performance
- Reduced footprint
- Higher reliability

Reliability and Low Maintenance Vital

SAN reliability and low maintenance were vital to Taylor, especially given the move to virtualization. The virtualized Windows servers at GE FABBRI are running key business applications including accounting, marketing, administration, Microsoft Exchange, all databases, Active Directory with user data and GoPublish. The ISE Storage Blade has exceeded Taylor's expectations. The dual Managed Reliability Controllers provide complete fail over capabilities. With the sealed DataPacs, Taylor has eliminated any requirement to touch or replace disk drives and with Xiotech's self-healing technology he has not experienced any downtime and maintains unfailing end user access to GE FABBRI's data.

More Usable Storage and Optimal Reliability

Recently, GE FABBRI announced that the company was merging with Eaglemoss Publishing Group, another UK-based partwork publisher. The newly formed company will almost double the number of employees and, also for IT, significantly increase the number of servers to be managed. Despite the recent corporate consolidation, Taylor will be able to scale up and provision his SAN requirements easily with Xiotech's ISE Storage Blades to accommodate the growth.

It Just Works

Taylor has especially appreciated that Xiotech's ISE gives him more usable storage than any other solution on the market. ISE is a flexible, foundational building block of storage that enables Taylor to configure the system for his unique needs and optimize it for his applications. Other benefits include:

- Increased speed and performance
- 30 percent less data center space for the same amount of storage
- Reliability more than 100 times that of traditional disk drives
- Uninterrupted service with the secondary fibre network connections
- Self heals any SAN issues
- Easily scalable to support data center consolidation projects
- Backed by an unparalleled 5 year warranty

"I never have to worry about the Xiotech system, it just works. Our systems run faster with no bottlenecks. And we're able to grow virtually without any limits."

**Kevin Taylor,
IT Manager, GE FABBRI**

About GE Fabbri

GE FABBRI was started in 1986 as a joint venture between GE PUBLISHING and the major Italian publishing company, Rizzoli Corriere della Sera (RCS). Recently, it was announced that GE FABBRI would merge with Eaglemoss Publishing. The merged company will have 140 employees and a major presence in the partwork publishing marketplace. GE FABBRI prides itself on the quality of its editorial content and its excellent track record in taking brands into the dynamic partwork sector of the publishing industry.

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