



Datacenter Solution Spotlight

Server Consolidation Project

Client: Private Liberal Arts College

Location: South Carolina

Business Need

The IT needs of this private college in South Carolina had drastically grown over the last several years with the staff increasing quickly from one person to 15. Their datacenter was very small and space was at a premium. Servers were being added, each of which was under-utilized in the absence of a virtualization strategy. Plus, ongoing IT projects were placing added urgency on the need for an upgrade. They were in the process of installing Microsoft Exchange and other new applications, and adding desktop virtualization to the computer labs, among other things.

The college needed to maximize floor space in the datacenter through blade server technology and more efficiently utilize server capacity through virtualization. MCPc, with its advanced datacenter expertise, helped the IT staff fully understand their present and future data requirements, and address them with the most appropriate server consolidation and virtualization solution.

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Solution

The college had been a client of MCPc for more than 21 years, the most recent collaboration being an implementation of a Visix digital signage solution. MCPc collaborated with the IT staff to evaluate the available solutions from a few different vendors. They were eventually directed towards a two-phased approach to streamlining their server environment: MCPc first helped the client install IBM blade servers and VMware server virtualization software, and about 10 weeks later worked with them to realign their storage array for greater efficiency.

MCPc guided them through the assessment process with IBM for both server consolidation and virtualization to gain an in-depth picture of their data infrastructure. Learning sessions were held in conjunction with IBM representatives to educate the client’s IT staff on blade server technology. MCPc engineers helped the client install and utilize IBM server analysis software and then provided the best configuration based on the analysis.

As the project progressed and the client gained a clearer picture of their current and future datacenter needs, it became necessary at one point to adjust the server configuration. The MCPc Solution Architects adapted the plan and delivered a reconfiguration that accommodated the new requirements while avoiding cost overruns.



Highlights

This private college in South Carolina had a datacenter with limited space as they continued to add servers to meet the needs of a growing student body. The IT staff wanted to maximize floor space and data capacity through server consolidation and virtualization. MCPc collaborated with the college to assess their present and future data needs, evaluate multiple vendor options and choose the most appropriate solution, and execute the installation.

Benefits

- Cost savings through greater energy efficiency, reduction of cabling and reduced demand on the cooling systems
- Consolidated server management has led to greater operational efficiencies for the IT staff.
- A more streamlined datacenter environment gives them the space to add more servers as they continue to grow.



Once the blade server and VMware pieces were in place, the datacenter storage array was evaluated. The college had a StoreVault (since acquired by NetApp) storage array that MCPc determined would not be compatible with the current version of the VMware server software. MCPc suggested a new, more suitable storage solution that was supported and would accommodate future growth, as well.

The entire project was completed within a 3-month period.

Results

With the blade servers in place, the college is in position to realize cost savings through improved energy efficiency, reduction of cabling and reduced demand on the cooling systems. The blade server structure also consolidates server management, yielding greater operational efficiencies for the IT staff. Moreover, it allows them to utilize space much more efficiently, and the extra room for growth means they will be able to scale their data capacity with ease in the future.

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The college has since migrated their entire portfolio of applications to the blade servers.

If your organization is looking to optimize its use of server resources and datacenter space, MCPc is ready to discuss server virtualization and consolidation solutions tailored to your unique needs.



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