



IDMI Fills the Void for Fundraising Organizations

Having an effective method for maintaining and accessing data is a void that many fundraising organizations face on a daily basis. International Data Management (IDMI), in Akron, Ohio, fills that void for their clients with the help of the award-winning Magnitude 3D[®] 3000e storage area network (SAN) solution from Xiotech Corporation.

President Paul Noonan describes IDMI's services: "For more than a decade we have provided full-service database management for religious, political, humanitarian, healthcare, and commercial organizations. We manage contributor data, credit card charges, and fulfillment for entire campaigns." The company also provides its clients with online access to their data. Client data must, therefore, be accessible 24x7—without performance bottlenecks. As the client list grows, so does the demand for flexible, data storage.

IDMI used to rely on servers with direct-attached storage, which became increasingly difficult and expensive to manage. "We kept buying more and more servers to keep up with the needs of our clients," says Manager of Information Systems Chris Hatridge. "We needed to find a more efficient way to expand and manage our storage. We looked at storage systems from HP and EMC, but they didn't offer the same virtualization as Xiotech, and their software was much more complex. We also wanted something that was compatible with both Novell NetWare and Microsoft Windows."

For three years, Xiotech's Magnitude[®] system provided flexible, easy-to-manage storage. But IDMI's storage needs kept growing, and with the Magnitude system nearing capacity, Hatridge was back in the market for a new storage system. This time, he again considered HP and EMC products, but ultimately chose Xiotech's Magnitude 3D 3000 clustered storage system. "For three years, our Magnitude system had 100 percent uptime—that speaks for itself," Hatridge explains. "And we were able to complete data migration to the new system during business hours with no impact to our employees or clients."

Clients Require Maximum Availability

As a growing company with increasing client demands, any downtime means loss of revenue. Magnitude 3D 3000 is designed to dramatically reduce all types of downtime. It includes clustered controllers and drive bays—that can even be separated to protect against local outages. Cross-cluster failover and failback provide added resilience for business continuity. In addition, just about all storage functions can be done online. "Being able to add and reconfigure storage on the fly without downtime to our clients is huge for IDMI," says Hatridge.



Industry

- International Database Service Provider

Requirements

- High availability
- Faster performance
- Increased capacity

Xiotech Solution

- Magnitude 3D 3000e
- Magnitude

Benefits

- Maximum uptime through built-in resilience and on-the-fly configuration
- More than enough performance to handle database applications
- Seamless scalability to meet growing needs

Operating Systems

- Microsoft[®] Windows[®] Server 2003
- Novell[®] NetWare[®]

Applications

- Microsoft SQL Server 2005, 64-bit

SAN Infrastructure

- McDATA[®]

Hatridge and his team also are implementing a clustered server architecture for another layer of fault tolerance. "Unlike EMC and HP systems, Magnitude 3D 3000 requires no software on the server. This makes server installations and upgrades much easier," says Hatridge. Booting servers from the SAN also speeds server replacement. He can take a preconfigured replacement server, point it at the failed server's boot volume, and be back up and running in minutes.

As vital as nonstop data availability is for IDMI, fast access to that data is equally important. Magnitude 3D 3000 has a significantly faster processor than the Magnitude system and offers cache that Hatridge and his team can turn on or off at the storage volume (virtual disk) level. This means that the 64-bit SQL Server 2005 application that IDMI uses for its databases can take full advantage of cache and the performance boost it provides—without having to share it with applications that really don't need it.

According to Hatridge: "It is impossible to estimate the gains of having zero downtime. Not only for us as a company, but for our clients as well. The Magnitude 3D 3000 system's uptime and faster performance ensure our clients have 24x7 access to their data, which provides a huge ROI (return on investment) for IDMI."

Cost-Effective Scale for Future Growth

Today, the Magnitude 3D 3000 system at IDMI supports 25 servers and more than 5 terabytes of data, making over 150 million records accessible on a daily basis. IDMI is expecting its data to at least double in the next few years, resulting in the need for additional storage. According to Hatridge: "With the exponential growth of IDMI and our clients, we need storage that we can easily expand. Magnitude

"It is impossible to estimate the gains of having zero downtime."

3D 3000 gives us that scalability. We can add drives and drive bays without downtime. We have the ability to use both Fibre Channel and SATA (Serial Advanced Technology Attachment) drives in the system, giving us the option to migrate data between the two. This provides us with the foundation for information lifecycle management, which saves us money on storage"

IDMI requires efficient use of its technical resources and does not have the luxury to employ or contract a dedicated SAN expert. Magnitude 3D 3000 simplifies storage management, allowing the IT group to focus on other initiatives, as well as saving work hours and additional expenses. Hatridge explains: "The ease of use of the Magnitude 3D system lets us configure and administer the storage infrastructure without relying on outside consultants. That alone provides substantial cost savings."

Although Hatridge and his staff have found Xitech's storage systems

easy to use, they also have taken advantage of Xitech's customer support on occasion. "Working with various Xitech engineers over the years, I know their support is excellent," says Hatridge. "They are extremely responsive and knowledgeable."

Future plans include implementing a disaster recovery strategy by deploying another Magnitude 3D system at an off-site location. IDMI's IT team can then use Xitech's DataScale™ Geo-Replication software or TimeScale™ system to replicate data between the locations and redirect servers for disaster recovery. Hatridge says, "This kind of data integrity is an enormous selling point for our customers, and the investment is crucial for IDMI's success."

Hatridge concludes: "With our type of business, we thrive off the latest and greatest technologies available, and Magnitude 3D 3000 is one of them." IDMI is counting on Xitech to continue to provide the technology they need to achieve their business goals and continue filling the void for their clients.

About IDMI

International Data Management (IDMI) was formed in 1994 to fill a void in the fundraising database management industry. That void was the need for a flexible, service oriented, company that is responsive to the specific needs of the organizations it serves.

IDMI is driven by one primary mission, to produce high quality, cost effective, professionally packaged database management services, without forgetting that all the technology in the world cannot replace good old-fashioned personalized service. The company has succeeded in this mission to benefit a multitude of not-for-profit fundraising, political, and ministry organizations.

Learn more at www.idmi.com.



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