

Mediengruppe Pressedruck depends on the cloud to deliver the daily news



NetApp® flash storage and NetApp StorageGRID® in a hybrid cloud keep newspaper readers up to date.

With newspaper, radio, and TV under one roof, Mediengruppe Pressedruck was one of Germany's first integrated media companies. But its heart is in print and online news. Augsburgener Allgemeine, Mainpost, and Südkurier are the flagship publications.

Competition and cost pressures are immense in the daily newspaper business. An economically successful future depends on high-quality content, loyal customers, and ongoing digital transformation, such as delivery of paid content or creating modern workplaces.

To meet strategic and operational requirements, Mediengruppe Pressedruck employs a cloud-based IT infrastructure. From journalistic investigation to timely delivery, NetApp serves as a hub for newspaper data.



More options, less cost

“Nobody is interested in the newspaper of yesterday. NetApp storage delivers data quickly and reliably.”

Günter Aue

Head of IT Infrastructure, Mediengruppe Pressedruck

Mediengruppe Pressedruck produces 55 newspaper editions every day, with stories carefully researched by more than 200 editors, delivered on time as ordered, and covering topics that matter to their readers.

Successful paid content requires delivering the right content for each audience, from paper-loving readers to digital fans. Therefore, specialists in editorial, reader market, publishing, and product development join forces directly. Together they produce and sell high-quality journalism on all channels.

For its data storage, Mediengruppe Pressedruck has relied on NetApp for years. The need for more speed, data growth, and workflow optimization demanded a fresh perspective. Together with its partner SVA, the IT team rethought data storage and backup. The goal: optimize efforts and storage costs. The method: a hybrid cloud made up of all-flash and object storage.

“Print and online are inseparable and often depend on the same data,” said the group’s head of IT infrastructure, Günter Aue. “Without data, there is no newspaper in whatever shape. NetApp helps us deliver day by day.”

No time for downtime

A daily newspaper never stands still. The main work happens between 7 in the morning and 11 at night. Logistics start early. Due to breaking news, editorial teams also work late, sometimes right up until printing starts. Therefore, any migration to new infrastructure technology had to occur during operations without interruption. VMware, Hyper-V, and NetApp SnapMirror® technologies made everything go smoothly.

Aue and his team manage numerous systems and databases for central and local print and online editorial offices, administration, and production-related areas. The most important applications are the editorial and advertising systems. The news desk coordinates the daily newspaper production and links it across media.

“NetApp storage delivers data quickly and reliably. Every step, from investigation to advertising sales to prepress and delivery logistics, depends on it. You can’t afford downtime with a product that has a one-day lifespan. Nobody is interested in the newspaper of yesterday,” said Aue.

More than 450 virtual servers, around 1,500 PC workplaces for internal and external users, and the online news offering are running at high performance on NetApp all-flash systems in NAS mode for Linux and Windows environments. An FC SAN was eliminated to simplify the infrastructure.

A NetApp AFF A300 MetroCluster IP provides business continuity across two data centers. It stores only primary data. Another two all-flash systems serve as primary and archive storage and as secondary storage on demand.

“The NetApp all-flash systems are so efficient that we can get by with a third of the previous capacity. Even during the migration, we could hardly imagine the sizing would work. But SVA did a great job,” Aue said.



Taming data and cost with object storage

Complementing the backup renewal, NetApp StorageGRID object storage replaced the tape library. Veeam software is in charge of the backup management, including NetApp file storage virtual machines and filing NetApp Snapshot™ backups on StorageGRID. NetApp Snapshot technology saves all file data, just as before. According to policies, NetApp FabricPool automates movement of the cold data from flash to object storage.

“Everything untouched within the past month is automatically shifted to the object storage. With millions of files, we save a lot of money and work,” said Aue.

The format and interface of object storage, as well as connecting virtual machines in a nontransparent way, helps protect against security risks like ransomware. Because the NetApp Snapshot technology creates images rather than copies, backups cannot become corrupted.

“StorageGRID offers many options. We can provide cloud storage for S3 or SWIFT applications within the group. And the rapidly growing archive finally found an affordable home,” Aue said.

Workflow optimization in the hybrid cloud

All newspaper pages are completely archived—1,000 pages per day, including all photographs. Archiving software organizes this ongoing file storage and allows full-text search. Users searching the archive receive quick results that are displayed as thumbnails stored on the all-flash MetroCluster. The high-resolution files are held in the object storage.



StorageGRID also archives SAP documents. For this to work, the all-flash MetroCluster keeps the communication going via the SAP Process Orchestration and 400 interfaces. If this hub were to stand still, the workflows would also stop. The solution will be expanded in the future to include incoming digital and paper invoices that are integrated into an automated invoice workflow.

The data transfer from flash to object storage and back will get faster. The team wants to use a StorageGRID load balancer to shorten data paths and get backups and other files from A to B faster. Savings on virtual machines will be an additional benefit.

Teamwork saved in the Azure cloud

As soon as the new infrastructure was up and running, supporting the home office faced a new challenge: the COVID-19 pandemic. How can face-to-face communication, dynamic group work, and file sharing be organized with little effort? Microsoft 365 filled all of those needs in a single cloud solution. Again, NetApp takes on the data backup.

“We decided on NetApp SaaS Backup because it met almost all of our criteria, including unlimited amounts of data and the familiar granular restores,” said Aue.

Responding to the new demand for a remote workplace, the IT team quickly converted its diverse application landscape serving 1,000 employees. With 600 home office users, they were able to double their user support.

“The coordination between the print and online editors and the advertising staff works, regardless of where they are. All workers are up to date, can design the edition together, and have quick access to the content systems on the central NetApp environment. In the past, this would not have been so easy,” said Aue.

The new storage infrastructure not only simplifies working relationships. It also backs the media group’s pragmatic approach to IT resources.

“Our companies are quite independent. They have their own IT, but rely on group services where it makes sense, such as for document management,” said Aue. “With NetApp we can fulfill any data storage need across our complex business structure.”

NetApp Products

AFF A300 systems in a 4-node MetroCluster IP

2 AFF A220 systems

9 StorageGRID SG5712 appliances at 3 sites

FabricPool data tiering

SnapMirror replication

Snapshot technology

SaaS Backup for Microsoft 365

Partner

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As a cloud-led, data-centric software company, only NetApp can help build your unique data fabric, simplify and connect your cloud, and securely deliver the right data, services and applications to the right people—anytime, anywhere. To learn more, visit www.netapp.com



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