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Review From A Customer

From IT Central Station, the leading review site for enterprise technology solutions.

Review by a Real User

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Systems Engineer at a healthcare company
with 5,001-10,000 employees

WHAT IS OUR PRIMARY USE CASE?

We are using for the virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) for our hospital. We are using a primary and secondary data center model. We have two locations where one is the primary and the other is the DR.

HOW HAS IT HELPED MY ORGANIZATION?

Essentially, it's reduced some of the overhead from our team of administrators, so they can focus on other areas. The solution has simplified infrastructure from edge to core to cloud, which has given us some bandwidth to focus on some other core initiatives that we have. The solution has made our staff more efficient, enabling them to spend time on tasks that drive our business forward. With the administration, it's given us a bit more time to do research and process development, even investing some time in automation.

WHAT IS MOST VALUABLE?

We had everything that we needed to start it, stand it up, and get it working, then develop a proof of concept to see how it works. We could also scale it out to meet our business needs over time. The solution's validated designs for major enterprise apps in our organization are very important. It's basically become critical to our organization to have that system functioning a 100 percent of the time. If that system is not functional, then our doctors and nurses can't provide the care to the patients in an effective way. So, it's important that it is stable, works, and easy to understand.

WHAT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT?

There is a history of issues with hardware availability. For example, we'll buy an array or a filer with a particular configuration and particular size of drive, sizing it appropriately. Then, as we grow, they're like, "Oh, you can always get more." Then when you go to get more, that model or type of disk is no longer available. It becomes this big process to try to figure out what we need to get, how it'll work, and how that'll integrate into the system. That could be simpler. They could do a bit more to guarantee the availability of parts. Obviously, not being the largest storage vendor, I know they can't sometimes control what the hardware vendors do. However, a bit more transparency and communication about this would be helpful.

FOR HOW LONG HAVE I USED THE SOLUTION?

We put it in about two and a half years ago.

WHAT DO I THINK ABOUT THE STABILITY OF THE SOLUTION?

The solution has decreased unplanned downtime incidents in our organization. So far, it's been very stable. We haven't really had any issues with it. We did have one issue which was related to a misconfiguration with the power that did cause downtime. That was the first issue that we had since we put it in about two and a half years ago. There was a misconfiguration with the power configuration. This relates to UCS where it was set to the grid incorrectly. Then, based on the population of the blades, it was overpopulated and there was a power issue. One of the circuits was actually connected to a low voltage circuit which caused some issues. With that, we lost almost the entire chassis for a period of time. It was not fun.

WHAT DO I THINK ABOUT THE SCALABILITY OF THE SOLUTION?

It is just a system that we can scale as we need. The scalability is good. We're in the process of systematically replacing all of the desktop computing environment in our health system with the VDI. Our plan is to take what we have and grow it to meet that need.

HOW ARE CUSTOMER SERVICE AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT?

We have used technical support a few times, mostly just for questions. The solution's unified support for the entire stack is really important. We can't ever find ourselves in a situation where something is down, and it's integrated with another vendor application and we're looking for support, that all the vendors are pointing fingers at each other. One of the requirements that we have for standing up a system like this is that it has this type of support.

WHICH SOLUTION DID I USE PREVIOUSLY AND WHY DID I SWITCH?

We had primarily used another vendor for our Tier 1 storage applications, then when the all-flash options came out, they were seemed to be doing better. It was a more reliable, well-developed product. We actually switched when we upgraded our existing arrays to the all-flash offerings that NetApp had. I wasn't the primary person for a good portion of the time that we've had it. Now that I've taken over that role, I'll be digging into it a lot more.

HOW WAS THE INITIAL SETUP?

The setup is complex, but not unreasonable. There is a lot to learn. There is a lot to do to make sure that all of the versioning is compatible. I know NetApp offers some tools if you're not familiar with it or you haven't done it before. I'm not sure that I've seen everything or know all the places to look for that information. So, it can be a little anxiety provoking in that sense.

WHAT ABOUT THE IMPLEMENTATION TEAM?

We have a partner through NetApp who does consulting for us. They came in and helped us configure it. The experience of working with them was good.

WHAT WAS OUR ROI?

The main return on investment would be that instead of having to refresh all of our desktop hardware we have been able to go reimaging existing machines and use those as thin clients, then also purchase new thin clients rather than buying actual hardware. It also reduces the overhead of having our technicians deploy those systems and maintain them. If there are cost savings, they are minimal, whether it's CAPEX or OPE. They balance out, as the vendors get paid one way or another.

WHAT OTHER ADVICE DO I HAVE?

Develop a relationship with a partner. Those resources for us have been invaluable. I would probably rate it about an eight (out of 10). That's just because it does meet the needs, but it's not perfect. Nothing is. There are some features or advertisements about what its capabilities are, but when dig into it or you get down the road, it's not exactly what it was advertised as. We are experimenting with the solution's storage tiering to public cloud right now. We haven't really gotten too far into it, but that's something that we're actually looking to do.

WHICH DEPLOYMENT MODEL ARE YOU USING FOR THIS SOLUTION?

On-premises

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