

NEXSAN **STORAGE OPTIMIZES** **VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENTS** **FOR THE CLARK ENERSEN** **PARTNERS**

Mounting storage requirements were driving the need for design firm The Clark Enersen Partners to consolidate its data and achieve greater information availability. With two locations and a dynamically growing 6.5TB of data to protect, the company needed a storage solution that could grow with it on the fly, while providing simplified management and supporting the company's disaster recovery initiatives. After selecting a combined solution from Nexsan, composed of iSCSI SANs - two SASBeasts® and dual Nexsan iSeries™ 200i, The Clark Enersen Partners is now ready for continued growth while benefiting from enterprise-class features to optimize its new virtual infrastructure.

ENVIRONMENT

- Two iSeries (200i) iSCSI SAN appliances and two Nexsan SASBeast tiered storage systems, dual controller with 28 x 600GB SAS drives and 14 x 2TB SATA drives per chassis
- Nexsan storage systems are configured as a stretched cluster/ metrocluster split between two server rooms across the campus
- Complete storage mirroring and active-active failover is provided by the Nexsan iSeries layer
- 6 Dell servers are connected by iSCSI to the Nexsan storage environment
- The Dell servers form a VMware ESX 4 cluster with three nodes per server room, currently running 60 Virtual machines
- VMware provides physical host, virtual machine/application failover
- The storage environment supports an open source Picture Archiving and Communications System (PACS)

CUSTOMER OVERVIEW

Founded in 1946, The Clark Enersen Partners is a design firm that specializes in architecture, engineering and landscape design. Through its design work, The Clark Enersen Partners has been a major influence in defining the character of the built and natural environment in its communities with work that is timeless and provides lasting value. Today, the company has offices in Nebraska, Missouri, and Kansas.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE: CONSOLIDATE MOUNTING STORAGE VOLUMES FOR GREATER STORAGE EFFICIENCY AND MANAGEMENT

The Clark Enersen Partners generates volumes of large image files for its design, engineering, and drafting clients. As a result, storage requirements were increasing as project sizes continued to grow. From content ranging from email data and customer correspondence to project-related data, the regional design firm needed to centralize its applications and storage to simplify management and minimize costs.

“Probably my biggest challenge as an IT manager is dealing with ever-growing file sizes which can drive up storage requirements significantly. But in addition to scalability issues that arise from storage growth, I also needed to centralize all of our data and have offsite replication so that disaster recovery was assured by having a backup copy of the data in each of our offices. Our legacy storage vendors struggled with these challenges.”

CORY PIERCE

IT MANAGER, THE CLARK ENERSEN PARTNERS



BENEFITS

- Purpose-built storage for virtualized environments
- Enterprise-class reliability and performance to meet the most stringent business requirements
- High-density storage with 42 disks per 4U of space
- AutoMAID® energy saving technology for up to 60% energy savings without compromising performance
- Easy installation and simplified management over Fibre Channel and iSCSI

SOLUTION: EXPANDABLE, RELIABLE STORAGE SOLUTIONS FROM NEXSAN

The Clark Enersen Partners performed a number of product comparisons to test scalability and functionality. Ultimately, the company selected a combination of two Nexsan SASBeast storage systems, each with 6TB of storage capacity, and dual Nexsan iSeries 200i SANs.

“In our research, Nexsan demonstrated the ability to meet our criteria,” said Pierce. “The systems have features that other companies just don’t have. Specifically, with Nexsan we are able to expand at a future date without buying another chassis and making a huge expenditure. That functionality was the piece that really sold me. Nexsan met every expectation I had.”

The Clark Enersen Group has deployed a Nexsan SASBeast at both of its office locations, one in the Lincoln office and one in Kansas City. The dual iSeries 200i SANs are running in cluster mode to allow for failover and high availability.

“The iSeries gives us the ability to do snapshots and replication through a central interface so we can ritualize our DR processes,” said Pierce. “With the iSeries, I really think Nexsan has put itself right in the forefront, leaping ahead of what other vendors are providing because Nexsan once again offers the flexibility to add additional storage on the fly.”

RESULTS: ENTERPRISE-CLASS FEATURES AND INSTALLATION SIMPLICITY GREATLY IMPROVE STORAGE MANAGEABILITY

After deploying the Nexsan systems, The Clark Enersen Partners have been impressed with the systems’ performance and reliability along with Nexsan’s customer service responsiveness. As a result, the company has seen a strong return on investment and increased storage manageability.

“The Nexsan systems were not hard to install,” said Pierce. “In fact, the simplicity started right from the beginning. I’ve never seen other companies package their products the way Nexsan does to make sure that when you get the device it’s in proper working order. And when I call Nexsan, I always talk to a person. Nexsan has even called me before possible issues arise because its staff can look ahead at what I’m dealing with and be proactive. So I felt pretty secure with the reliability and the quality of the Nexsan product.”



Once the Nexsan systems were up and running, the design firm was also impressed by the enterprise-class features it received. The biggest advantages for the firm included:

- **Low-Cost Scalability** - The Clark Enersen Partners can scale capacity without having to purchase additional storage systems
- **High Performance** - Now data and logs can be placed on separate physical RAID sets within the same system, optimizing database performance. SAN controllers are independent and active/active
- **Complete Storage Services** - All storage services are embedded onto the Nexsan iSeries for simplified operation, including virtualization, snapshots, replication, mirroring, and data migration
- **Storage Virtualization** - The design firm can eliminate storage waste by creating thousands of custom volumes that precisely address the needs of individual applications

“The Nexsan devices have allowed us to get enterprise-class features at a cost we can afford,” said Pierce. “We now have some pretty invaluable tools to manage our data back end with snapshots, mirroring, and replication. This gives us the offsite storage we needed for disaster recovery and high availability. The assured data protection we now have is very important for us.”

For more information on The Clark Enersen Partners, visit www.clarkenersen.com and www.scienceandresearchdesign.com

ABOUT NEXSAN

Nexsan® is a leading independent provider of disk-based storage systems purpose-built and priced for the mid-market, offering industry-leading reliability, space and power efficiency. Nexsan storage systems provide scalability, integrity and security for growing volumes of unstructured data and are ideal for virtual storage, data protection, secure online archiving, bulk and cloud storage applications. Overcoming the challenges of traditional storage, Nexsan delivers a different kind of storage experience with easy-to-use, efficient and enterprise-class solutions that reduce the complexity and cost of storage. Nexsan delivers its storage systems through a select global partner ecosystem of solution providers, OEMs and system integrators. Nexsan is based in Thousand Oaks, Calif. For more information, visit the company’s website at www.nexsan.com.