



Success Story

Business Driving Performance



Another NetApp solution delivered by:



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Industry

Retail

The Challenge

The company needed a new platform that would provide high performance, scalability, and cost effectiveness.

The Solution

Implement a new all-flash platform based on NetApp AFF8040 for primary storage and disaster recovery. Introduce NetApp E-Series E2760 for backup alongside Veeam and upgrade the operating system from 7-Mode to clustered Data ONTAP.

Benefits

- Performance improvements across the board
- Ease of management; is flexible and scalable
- Business support with faster and more accurate sales insights
- Generates store reports much quicker
- Improves supply chain accuracy and volume product ordering
- Renewed focus for IT team on business development

Success Story

Dunelm, the UK's largest homewares retailers, adopts a NetApp® all-flash storage platform to accommodate and accelerate business growth. The move addresses previous storage bottleneck problems and underpins improved operations, such as more accurate and faster supply chain management, while providing a platform for business expansion.

Customer Profile

Dunelm Group is a UK-based home furnishings retailer with over 150 stores, most of which are out-of-town superstores. The first Dunelm store opened in Churchgate, Leicester, in 1984 and the first superstore opened in Rotherham in 1991.

Dunelm is the largest homeware retailers in the UK and provides "multichannel" shopping through online, mobile, catalog, telephone ordering, and "reserve and collect" propositions that drive significant revenue.

Headquartered at Syston in Leicestershire, Dunelm also has its own factory in Leicester for curtains, blinds, and accessories. The company's year-on-year growth was 12.7% for the financial year ending 2015, chalking up revenue of £823

million. Dunelm has over 5,000 employees.

The Challenge

The company had been running a NetApp storage platform based on a NetApp FAS3240 with TB100 SAS. The platform had been in use for just over three years. Although it served Dunelm well, it was essentially unable to handle the additional requirements placed on it by consistent growth and the steady introduction of new applications.

Specifically, Dunelm was experiencing storage bottlenecks attributed to poor IOPS performance and latency levels of 40 milliseconds. CPU and memory capacity was also strained. These issues created a situation in which the IT team was firefighting on a daily basis and was consistently troubleshooting.

Ben Ashdown, Head of IT Services, Dunelm, said: "Since we installed the NetApp FAS3240 platform, we had grown our server estate significantly. Clearly this was going to impact our storage platform, and we needed a SAN that would solve performance issues, provide a scale-out architecture, and deliver high cost efficiencies."

“We now have only 2 to 3 milliseconds latency, great IOPS performance, and we’re only utilising 28% of CPU capacity, which gives us lots of headroom for expansion.”

Ben Ashdown

Head of IT Services
Dunelm

The Solution

Chetan Joshi, Infrastructure Team leader, Dunelm, says the IT team cast a large net over the storage market to find a platform that would meet its needs: “We looked at all of the storage vendors you would expect, such as HP’s 3PAR, Dell, EMC, NetApp, and some of the relatively new players such as Nimble and Pure Storage.

“We carried out an extensive comparative analysis of the different options and eventually decided on an all-flash array from NetApp. Basically, NetApp is at the forefront of established storage, yet it has a fresh approach and its technology includes many compelling features, such as easy dedupe and compression. Cost was also a factor, and despite opting for a flash-based platform, the cost was actually very favourable.”

The new platform is based on a NetApp AFF8040 for both primary storage and disaster recovery. The NetApp E-Series E2760 was also introduced for backup alongside Veeam. An operating system upgrade resulted in a move from NetApp Data ONTAP® software operating in 7-Mode to the flexible clustered Data ONTAP. Essentially, a flash-based platform enables Dunelm to easily and confidently adapt to changing business needs while enabling core IT requirements for uptime, scalability, and cost efficiency.

Interestingly, Dunelm also initiated a direct relationship with NetApp Support. Chetan explains: “Previously we used a VAR for support but we had outgrown this kind of service model. By going direct with NetApp we get to the right people quickly and at the right level.”

Business Benefits

Huge performance increase

The NetApp AFF8040 platform has led to sweeping improvements across the board, delivering at least a 10-times performance improvement compared to its previous platform. Ben elaborates: “We now have only 2 to 3 milliseconds latency, great IOPS performance, and we’re only utilising 28% of CPU capacity, which gives us lots of headroom for expansion.”

Faster business insight

The business can now generate faster reports for each store, sending the data to each store at 2:30 in the morning compared to 7:30 a.m. previously. Doing so enables store managers to gain information on best-selling product lines, sales, and collections and generally have more accurate data. “Store managers are now receiving more accurate information faster so they can optimise product lines and ensure they have the correct stock in place. There has been a five-hour improvement in the time it takes to generate these reports,” explains Ben.

“We have now forgotten about storage because everything is running smoothly. The team is now concentrating on other technology initiatives to drive the business forward.”

Chetan Joshi

Infrastructure Team Leader
Dunelm

Improved supply chain

The all-flash platform now generates near-real-time information, which means that the data generated from sales almost immediately churns through to its ERP platform. In turn this has improved its supply chain operations because volume product ordering is more accurate and, importantly, quicker.

Fast backup and scale-out

“The speed of backups is outstanding thanks to the integrated NetApp platform, with the AFF8040 as both primary and backup. At the same time we now have great flexibility for scale-out, so we can easily expand to meet growing business needs,” says Ben.

Renewed focus on business development

Previously, the IT team spent much of its time on troubleshooting storage issues. Today, this work has been eliminated. Chetan says that this benefit has enabled the team to focus on business development: “We have now forgotten about storage because everything is running smoothly. The team is now concentrating on other technology initiatives to drive the business forward.”

SOLUTION COMPONENTS

- Two NetApp AFF8040 systems for primary storage and disaster recovery
- Two NetApp E2760 systems for backup alongside Veeam
- Clustered Data ONTAP operating system

Partner

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