



Success Story

INPS consolidates its market position with lightning-fast application performance



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Industry

Software and hosting

The Challenge

Introduce a storage platform that delivers highly reliable performance and simple management to consolidate and grow the business.

The Solution

Replace existing storage with a NetApp platform and upgrade to flash technologies.

Benefits

- Guaranteed high performance
- Rapid and frequent data backups
- Strengthens customer relationships
- Operational cost savings passed on to customers
- Flexible, easy-to-manage platform
- Enables continued innovation

Customer Profile

In Practice Systems (INPS) is a software development company headquartered in London. The company provides applications for the healthcare industry designed to revolutionise the digital health care experience, and improve, GP practice efficiency, and online services for patients. INPS is a thriving business with thousands of users. The company also hosts IT services, operating out of two data centres in England and two in Wales.

INPS's flagship service, Vision, is a flexible IT platform that helps the National Health Service provide patients with high-quality services on any device at any time and from any location. The platform ensures that relevant information is available to healthcare teams and, as a result, enhances collaboration and reduces duplication. Patients receive a more effective and efficient healthcare service while health boards have many opportunities to provide high-quality and cost-effective healthcare services.

The Challenge

INPS works in a fiercely competitive market. Its products are I/O intensive and the ability for a doctor to pull up a patient's records quickly is critical. That ability can make all

the difference to the success of the company's products and services.

However, several years ago, the company's rivals started catching up in application performance. INPS's services promise fast and accurate data capture during patient encounters and patient online interaction, so the infrastructure needed to keep up.

Jeff Pike, associate director, Enterprise Services, INPS, explains: "We needed a storage platform that was robust, high performing, and could support the intensive I/O we required."

In summary, the company had several pressing requirements. Because of its growing application demands, environment latency needed to be reduced to sub-5ms while data ingestion time for data from GP practices needed to be increased. Also, INPS needed to reduce the costs associated with managing the storage platform to grow.

The Solution

INPS carried out an extensive assessment of various storage platforms and ultimately decided on NetApp. The decision was informed by several important factors, as Jeff explains: "NetApp is a modular

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platform which makes it extremely simple to manage. With robust and extremely fast backups with guaranteed performance, it was an easy decision to make.”

The company initially selected the FAS3170, which delivered 1680TB of raw capacity and a disk drive capacity of 840 drives. This platform was so successful in addressing INPS’s management and I/O requirements that the company has continued to evolve its storage platform with NetApp.

For instance, INPS recently replaced the FAS3170 with two FAS8060 units that deliver 100TB of flash storage and a FAS2554 with NetApp Flash Pool™ intelligent caching for backup with NetApp SnapVault® software. The company also implemented two AFF8020 units and the NetApp clustered Data ONTAP® operating system with a FAS2554 for backup with SnapVault to develop a flash-based platform that delivers lightning-fast performance.

Business Benefits

Flash Journey Underpins Business

With the implementation of the FAS8060 platform and the AFF8020, the company essentially embarked on a flash storage journey. Jeff says, “The all-flash approach is helping us galvanise our market standing. From the data perspective, our operations are 90% read and 10% write. The NetApp platform ensures that when a doctor opens up an application and accesses patient records, the information is available almost immediately. This is a critical point for the continued success of our business.”

Strengthening Its Standing with the NHS

The NHS has an understandably low tolerance for data loss. The service’s data contains sensitive information about patient diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment. Therefore, the loss of data can have serious implications; essentially, lives can be put at risk.

To minimise data loss in the event of a disaster, INPS implemented semi-synchronous replication between its data centres. The service also takes data snapshots every evening and holds six months of snapshots before transferring them to tape. Previously these data protection requirements affected performance and slowed systems down, but now, thanks to the NetApp platform, this issue has been successfully negotiated.

“It used to take us several hours to take backups every evening. But now, with NetApp, it takes several minutes using snapshots and vaulting. That’s a radical improvement,” Jeff adds.

Lower Costs, Greater Business Benefits

One of the benefits of the NetApp platform has been the lower operational costs that were needed. Jeff says, “One of the advantages of NetApp’s continual innovation is that the cost of operations comes down. We can consolidate all of our storage tasks such as compression, data deduplication, and backup. In practical terms, this means lower operational costs, and the savings we make are passed on to the NHS.”

Simple Management

One of the compelling attractions for INPS was the ease and simplicity with which the NetApp platform can be managed. Jeff elaborates: “Everything is there. It’s an all-in-one end-to-end solution. With other vendors you have to bolt things on like replication or vaulting. With NetApp you don’t, and this makes it extremely simple to manage.”

Blistering Performance, Better Service for Customers

INPS needed a storage platform that could provide the fast IOPS performance required to support its applications. “NetApp gives us all the performance we need, which is great for our customers. It’s lightning fast, underpins data delivery, and is application responsive, which is what customers need,” adds Jeff.

Future Flexibility with the Cloud

The performance and benefits of the NetApp platform, particularly the all-flash array, have led INPS to consider moving data backup to the cloud in the near future. Doing so would reduce costs, provide flexibility, deliver simplicity, and be easy to manage and maintain. “It’s certainly a strong consideration, and we have an eye to the future with NetApp and backup in the cloud,” Jeff concludes.

SOLUTION COMPONENTS

- Two FAS8060 units with 100TB of flash storage
- FAS2554 with Flash Pool
- Two AFF8020 units
- FAS2554



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