



IT provider reduces cost and complexity of cloud services with IBM PureFlex Systems

Overview

Business challenge

Vintek, a leading provider of managed IT services, needed to consolidate the technology underlying its cloud services to improve performance for its customers.

Solution

The IBM® PureFlex™ System let Vintek combine all of its cloud services into a single platform that greatly improved performance and efficiency for customers.

Business Benefits

- Reduced maintenance and management costs
 - Increased reliability and performance for customers
 - Faster network creation with software-defined networking technology
 - Lower staff overheads
 - Simplified infrastructure management
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Introduction

Vintek is an Australian-owned IT systems provider and IBM Business Partner headquartered in Adelaide, South Australia. Established in 1999, the company's 28 employees provide hosting, cloud infrastructure and data centre services to around 1,100 clients worldwide, including third party managed cloud services providers, systems integrators and corporations.

The Challenge

Management cost reduction required

In early 2012, Vintek was using a range of technology and hardware to support its clients' systems and store their data, which had gradually become more costly to monitor and maintain.

"Running an IT system comprising of disparate parts can become pretty expensive," says Paul Vinton, Vintek's founder and director. "To effectively monitor and maintain it, we needed a big team of staff who were familiar with each of the technologies."

To ensure its cloud and data centre hosting services remained viable and profitable, Vintek needed to reduce the amount of time and money spent managing and maintaining its hardware.

Meeting clients' high performance standards

Vintek's clients rely on its services to operate complex IT business systems, which requires consistently high levels of efficiency and reliability.

"It's not just about processing power – it's about how quickly the processor works with the storage input and output (I/O) to produce the desired outcome," says Vinton. "If the storage in the system can't keep up with the compute speed, everything slows down and our clients' businesses suffer. We can't afford to let that happen, ever."

Accelerate network creation for clients

Vintek also needed to reduce the amount of time required to create networks for virtual environments. Clients could use the company's services to create new server images in minutes, but provisioning a network for that server often took several weeks.

"Once a client set up a new network, we had to manually make that network visible to every single device across their business," says Vinton. "We wanted to find a way to make the process less painful for us and our clients."





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– Paul Vinton, Founder and Director, Vintek

The Solution

Stronger performance

In January 2013, IBM implemented a PureFlex System containing a POWER7+™ p260 node and GRID K2 with PCIe expansion node. The system also contains a cluster of three x240 nodes that Vintek uses to support its virtual environments.

“One of our international clients is currently using those nodes to coordinate 25 depots for the country’s entire public transport system,” says Vinton.

“Vintek demonstrated significantly superior performance on the PureFlex system for the client, causing them to look towards moving their entire offering to the PureFlex solution.”

Improved storage performance

The IBM Storwize V7000 Storage Node’s Real-time Compression and IBM System Storage Easy Tier function have improved performance for Vintek and its clients.

“The Real-time Compression in the V7000 is great – it’s saved just over 48 percent of the disk space we were previously using,” says Vinton. *“Easy Tier also improved our data I/O a great deal. It shifts frequently accessed data from hard disks to solid state drives (SSDs), so that the user can access it more quickly, resulting in much faster throughput and better performance.”*

Software-defined networking

Vintek is the first IBM customer to deploy IBM Software Defined Networking with OpenFlow, a new data centre networking protocol for virtual environments. This has allowed the company and its clients to create virtual networks that are isolated from the physical network components, in the same way that a virtual server is decoupled from the hardware that hosts it.

“That means we can now run multiple networks out of a single machine,” says Vinton. *“The switches become dumb hardware, and you take the management and control into a single OpenFlow server. We’ve used it to virtualise our networks.”*



IBM Australia & New Zealand

Case Study

The Benefits

Lower overheads for hardware management

IBM's PureFlex System consolidates all the functions of Vintek's prior setup into a single platform. Employees can now control the whole system through a single interface, which has greatly simplified infrastructure management.

"With PureFlex, we can do everything through a single pane of glass," says Vinton. "Having a single management console has drastically lowered the overheads we needed to keep on top of maintenance."

Greater system reliability for clients

IBM's Storwize V7000 and Easy Tier functionality have allowed Vintek to offer clients more efficient and reliable data centre, cloud infrastructure, hosting and other IT services.

"The real advantage of the PureFlex System is that it provides you with a mix of very reliable, high-end gear," says Vinton. "That's where the V7000 comes to the fore – it dynamically manages data by looking for frequently accessed information and moving it to the SSD drives for much faster access."

"On average, we've seen the V7000 performs 50 times better than our previous static storage hardware, which translates to more reliable services for our clients and their customers."

Compelling service demonstrations

Vintek has already begun to use the PureFlex System to show clients how much more efficient their systems could be. When an architecture firm turned to Vintek for advice on cloud infrastructure, Vinton invited its engineer to test the PureFlex System.

"They were using \$8,000 workstations to manage their high-end design work," says Vinton. "We installed a cloud-based graphics processing unit in a virtual environment for their engineer to test. The performance inside the PureFlex System was faster than anything the firm had experienced with its localised \$8,000 workstations."

Faster turnaround for network creation

IBM Software Defined Networking has given Vintek the ability to create virtual networks as quickly as it can create virtual servers. The company can now provision a virtual network for clients in hours rather than days or weeks.

"When we mention virtual local area networks (VLANs), most clients go a bit pale, as these can be very difficult to manage," says Vinton. "If the client makes even a small mistake on a switch or router, it can bring whole sections of the network to a grinding halt."

"OpenFlow manages all of your VLANs for you and also makes them more secure. It has very defined rules that don't let you make the mistakes that bring down normal network environments."

IBM Software Defined Networking removes the need for expenditure on creating and maintaining networks.

"The management of our network has become incredibly simple since we started using OpenFlow – we don't need a network specialist," says Vinton. "For us, OpenFlow has been absolutely phenomenal."

Solution components

Industry

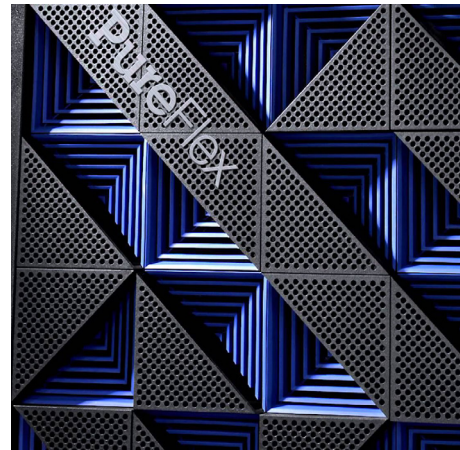
- IT services

Hardware

- IBM PureFlex System
- IBM Flex System POWER7+ p260 node
- IBM Flex System x240 node
- IBM Storwize V7000

Software

- IBM Software Defined Networking
- OpenFlow data centre protocol



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Paul Vinton, Founder and Director, Vintek



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