Landwirtschaftsverlag Münster optimizes its storage environment

Siegen. Commercial data volumes are rising by the day – but adding storage capacity costs money. This was exactly the issue facing the agricultural publisher Landwirtschaftsverlag Münster. In order to break out of this vicious cycle, the media firm implemented a new data storage plan: instead of expanding its existing storage environment, it implemented a multi-tiered storage architecture based on intelligent data and storage management. The solution automatically differentiates between active and inactive data – and stores it according to its intended use in tiers of differencing performance levels. Landwirtschaftsverlag Münster chose the PoINT Storage Manager from PoINT Software & Systems GmbH to realize this concept, while the implementation partner for the project was ICSmedia GmbH, which had supported the publishing house with IT services for many years.

Around 15 terabytes of highly available data is located on Landwirtschaftsverlag Münster's file servers; it had previously been distributed across two mirrored NetApp storage systems. The constantly rising data volumes required more and more storage space. Expanding the mirrored cluster storage system initially appeared to be the only way out – but it was an expensive option. Looking for an alternative, the company received a decisive tip-off from ICSmedia GmbH: "We recommended that Landwirtschaftsverlag Münster examine how its existing data was being used. Was all of it really in active use? And did it actually need to be kept in mirrored primary storage?" said Johann Miske, the relevant sales associate at ICSmedia GmbH, as he explained the process.

Over the course of this further analysis, it became clear that primary storage alone was not in fact necessary. "With the PoINT Storage Manager, we could therefore provide a suitable solution enabling rules-based storage on a capacity-oriented NetApp FAS SATA shelf without changing how employees accessed the data. This allowed the optimization of existing storage systems."

That really caught everyone's interest! Landwirtschaftsverlag Münster placed the solution under the microscope with a detailed three-month test phase. "With the PoINT Storage Manager, we realized a range of scenarios in which our data was distributed according to this storage plan," said Thorsten Schmidt, vice-head of IT at Landwirtschaftsverlag Münster,

adding, "The storage process remains transparent at all times, meaning data is always directly accessible." After just a few weeks, the data and storage management software was therefore awarded the contract. Since then, Landwirtschaftsverlag Münster has been able to make significantly more efficient use of its existing capacity and save the investments in storage which it had originally planned to make.

Inactive data is moved to the lower storage tier according to a rules-driven process. Specifically, the management software includes a setting which automatically moves data older than three months from primary to secondary storage. All of this was achieved with a relatively low investment cost: "Adopting the PoINT Storage Manager costs us significantly less, including over the long term, than purchasing more mirrored primary storage," said Thorsten Schmidt, summarizing the results.

In implementing the new storage solution, the agricultural publisher is also sowing the seeds for the future. If the existing volumes prove no longer to be sufficient at some point down the line, the company can move its data to ICSmedia's data center, where it will be available in the cloud.

About Landwirtschaftsverlag Münster:
Landwirtschaftsverlag Münster is one of the 100 largest media companies in Germany, with approximately 600 employees located both in the country and abroad. The firm publishes magazines, books and new media for the agricultural and rural sectors; with a total of 30 specialist and general-interest titles, it is the leading specialist agrarian publisher in Europe.

About ICSmedia GmbH:
ICSmedia GmbH, a member of the DTS Group, is an established IT service provider focusing on the fields of data centers, security and technology. The company maintains three of its own data centers in Germany and has many years of technical know-how as well as extensive expertise in security.

About PoINT
PoINT Software & Systems GmbH is specialized in the development of software products and systems solutions for storage and management of data using all available mass storage technologies like optical, hard disk, tape, cloud and object store. Close collaboration with leading hardware manufacturers enables an early support of innovative storage technologies. Besides these complete solutions PoINT also offers its know-how as Toolkits, which can be easily integrated in other applications by a programming interface. Furthermore PoINT projects entire storage solutions and provides consultancy with its long-term and versatile experience.

PoINT products are distributed by our partners in more than 25 countries worldwide and have been installed successfully in more than 2 million installations. PoINT customers range from end users expecting a compact and secure solution to large corporations, which meet with our solutions their complex demands by providing the necessary reliability and perfection.

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