

## SherWeb

### EMC Virtual Provisioning helps increase competitive advantage in Exchange 2010 hosting market

#### Challenges

- Support Microsoft Exchange 2010 mailbox capacities up to 25 gigabytes
- Maintain superior levels of performance and availability for Microsoft Exchange 2010 hosting customers

#### Solutions

- EMC CLARiiON CX4 networked storage
- EMC CLARiiON Virtual Provisioning
- EMC Navisphere software
- EMC PowerPath software

#### Key benefits

- Reduced upfront storage expenditures by allocating 94 percent less storage using EMC Virtual Provisioning
- Less time required by storage administration staff for provisioning
- Increased storage utilization by 20 percent
- Storage cabinet space and power and cooling costs reduced by 50 percent

Based in Sherbrooke (Quebec), Canada, SherWeb is a software-as-a-service (SaaS) market leader, delivering on-demand applications over the Internet to businesses and partners all over the world. Customers rely on SherWeb's hosted IT services to reduce their IT administrative costs and gain increased service availability.

A Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner, SherWeb has become an expert in offering hosted Microsoft Exchange®, SharePoint®, Web, CRM, and VPS solutions. The company is currently the largest Exchange hosting firm in Canada and ranks as one of the top five in the U.S.—and is one of the fastest growing Exchange providers in the world.

In preparation for Microsoft's release of Exchange 2010, SherWeb began exploring options to expand its existing EMC® CLARiiON® CX3 storage area network (SAN), which supports more than 70,000 Exchange 2007 mailboxes. The company's goal was to offer the best Exchange 2010 user experience, but the new release presented technical challenges.

"The new Exchange 2010 mailbox sizes have increased from two to three gigabytes for Exchange 2007 to 20 to 25 gigabytes," says Jean Caron, Director of Technical Operations. "With Microsoft and Google offering up to 25 gigabyte mailboxes for their hosted Exchange 2010 services, we needed to match that while providing the superior e-mail experience, performance, and service reliability we have always provided our customers with."

#### EMC rises to the challenge

To address the new Exchange 2010 requirements while continuing to support its Exchange 2007 customers, SherWeb chose to expand its relationship with EMC. SherWeb worked closely with EMC's application consultants to define its requirements and selected a CLARiiON CX4 SAN, knowing it would continue to receive the services, support, and expertise the company had come to appreciate from EMC.

"Although Exchange 2010 had just been released, EMC had significant expertise with the product," says Caron. "They had already done benchmarking, which factored into our decision-making. EMC's role as a trusted advisor and strong partner, combined with its advanced technologies, enabled us to solve key business challenges in the Exchange market."

In addition, the EMC Proven™ Solutions team received early access to software code through the Microsoft Exchange 2010 Technology Adoption Program, and tested many variants of alpha and beta code before releasing their technical guidance on [www.EMC.com/exchange](http://www.EMC.com/exchange).

Another primary reason SherWeb chose a CLARiiON CX4 was for its virtual provisioning technology, which enables more efficient storage allocation. For additional efficiency, SherWeb virtualized its server environment with the R2 version of Microsoft's Hyper-V™, and leverages the CLARiiON CX4, using cost-effective, one-terabyte SATA drives for the Exchange 2010 mailbox server databases.

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Director of Technical Operations**

SherWeb also uses EMC Navisphere® and EMC PowerPath® software to centrally manage and increase the reliability and performance of its storage environment. SherWeb stores two copies of its databases using database availability groups (DAGs) on the CLARiiON and executes daily backups to tape.

The company continues to use the CLARiiON CX3 for its Exchange 2007 environment. The CLARiiON CX3 also provides consolidated storage to SherWeb’s 6,000 hosted SharePoint users as well as customers of its hosted web and CRM-hosted offerings.

### Meeting expectations

With CLARiiON Virtual Provisioning, SherWeb can efficiently and reliably address dramatic increases in the mailbox capacity of its Exchange 2010 environment so they can deliver just the right amount of capacity and performance at the right time.

“In our previous environment, as soon as we allocated storage we needed to keep 20 percent of free space on each LUN to ensure high performance,” explains Caron. “With our large infrastructure, this meant we couldn’t access a significant amount of storage capacity. And once we had allocated the LUNs, we couldn’t get them back.”

With EMC Virtual Provisioning, SherWeb uses CLARiiON thin LUNs that present more storage to the servers than is physically available. Storage is automatically allocated from a shared, central pool to servers with varying requirements for storage capacity. When needed, additional disks can be non-disruptively added to the pool.

“We’ve increased our storage utilization by at least 20 percent,” adds Caron. “Almost all vendors offer thin provisioning, but EMC’s Virtual Provisioning provides the most flexibility and efficiency.”

The CLARiiON CX4 also enables SherWeb to achieve significant cost savings. “We’re reducing our storage expenditures because we need to buy less storage upfront and we can pay as we grow,” says Caron. “We’ve also made our infrastructure more ‘green’ and estimate that we’re reducing our cabinet space and power and cooling costs by half. Now that provisioning is so much more streamlined and automated, we also spend less time on storage administration.”

Tiering storage within the CLARiiON CX4 is another source of cost savings. SherWeb can further reduce storage expenditures and deliver targeted levels of performance across its infrastructure by utilizing a mix of low-cost SATA and high-performance SAS drives.

In the past year, SherWeb’s storage infrastructure grew from 75 to 250 terabytes, and the company plans for even more significant growth in the upcoming year. Scalability will be especially critical in the Exchange 2010 environment.

“It’s not really the size of the mailbox that we need to look at—it’s the size needed on the disk for the whole database, all of the users, all of the index, everything,” Caron explains. “Few users will actually need 25-gigabyte mailboxes, so we’re basing our overall numbers on 1.5-gigabyte capacity per mailbox. We can be conservative because we know that we have the flexibility to easily and non-disruptively expand our virtual provisioning pool at any time.”

The solution’s benefits also extend beyond SherWeb’s internal operations.

“EMC Virtual Provisioning is so much more efficient that we’re able to invest the cost and time savings into other infrastructure projects and deliver new services or enhancements,” concludes Caron. “Our customers get a plus from this as well, and we’re able to increase our competitive advantage.”



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