



CREDIT UNION OF COLORADO BANKS ON GREEN STORAGE WITH COMPELLENT SAN



At the Credit Union of Colorado, a dedication to cutting-edge technology and an understanding of how it can benefit members goes far beyond a friendly face offered by most community credit unions. Applying this technological innovation to a full spectrum of products—including mortgages, loans, checking and savings accounts, investment services and

online banking—puts the Credit Union of Colorado on par or better with much larger financial enterprises.

As an organization ultimately run by a board of its members, Credit Union of Colorado has a unique view of the issues most critical to its members. Recently, the board indicated that improved business continuity, redundant data protection and reduced environmental impact were top member concerns—but the credit union’s underlying storage infrastructure presented an obstacle to addressing those goals. With cumbersome tape backups as the only recovery source, the restore process could interrupt service for days.

“Our IT staff supports 14 branches across the state, and I am the only dedicated storage admin. If we were consumed by a lengthy recovery process, other support calls could go unanswered,” said Jared Cowart, senior network administrator at Credit Union of Colorado. “We needed a new solution that would give us the speed and flexibility to deliver the innovative data protection our management and members expect.”

Cowart began the search for a storage area network (SAN) that would act as a foundation to better protect member assets. With advanced remote replication functionality, the Compellent® Storage Center™ SAN quickly pulled ahead of the pack.

“While several vendors offered the features I was looking for, they were all tied to expensive add-on software bundles,” Cowart says. “Compellent included everything I needed, plus extensive support for storage and server virtualization that could help us consolidate our environment and reduce energy consumption.”

DATA PROGRESSION AND FAST TRACK OPTIMIZE UTILIZATION AND REDUCE COSTS

The Compellent SAN ultimately helps Credit Union of Colorado deliver better service to their staff and members, and they immediately noticed the SAN’s effect on the bottom line. Compellent’s Data Progression™ software delivers a complete Automated Tiered Storage solution, which dynamically classifies and moves data between tiers of storage based on how frequently the data is accessed. By managing this process automatically,



“The depth and simplicity of the Compellent SAN gives us enterprise-level storage that can be managed by a single employee.”

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Senior Network Administrator
Credit Union of Colorado

RESULTS REPORTED BY CREDIT UNION OF COLORADO

- » Data Progression moved 95 percent of data to less expensive drives saving \$800 per disk
- » Fast Track drive-level optimization will help speed performance for seek-intensive applications
- » As part of a green data center, virtualized storage and servers will help reduce physical server footprint by 50 percent
- » Free Space Recovery reclaimed 10-20 percent of Windows file space
- » Easy-to-use remote replication allows data to be restored in minutes

OPERATING SYSTEMS

- » Microsoft Windows Server®
- » Mac OS X
- » IBM AIX
- » Red Hat Linux

KEY APPLICATIONS

- » Microsoft Cluster Server
- » Microsoft Exchange, SQL Server 2000
- » Microsoft Internet Information Services
- » Apache HTTP Server
- » Symitar Systems banking services software

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE WITH ENTERPRISE MANAGER

Extensive visibility into how storage is being used is a key component of the one-man storage enterprise at Credit Union of Colorado. Compellent's Enterprise Manager simplifies SAN management by providing comprehensive monitoring and reporting for all local and remote Storage Center environments. A single administrator can use this global view of storage to quickly assess where storage is—and where it's going.

“With Enterprise Manager, I can keep track of the return on our storage investment as our data needs continue to grow. I can quickly generate monthly reports for budgeting purposes, and the time I save lets me focus on forward-thinking technology and initiatives.”

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Data Progression not only cuts administrative time, it reduces the need for costly high-performance disks. “Compellent optimizes how our data is stored, allowing us to buy inexpensive disks as we grow,” says Cowart. “Data Progression migrated 95 percent of our data to a lower tier because it was rarely accessed. We’re now saving about \$800 per disk without compromising performance.”

A recent upgrade to Storage Center 4.0 has Cowart looking forward to Compellent's Fast Track feature for even more storage efficiency and performance. Fast Track automates the placement of the most active blocks of data on the fastest edges of each drive. This improves performance and reduces the need for costly high performance drives.

“Fast Track acts as another tier in our environment—one that can enable significant gains in performance,” says Cowart. “I’m confident that Fast Track will speed access to data in our seek-intensive applications.”

GOING GREEN WITH VIRTUALIZED STORAGE

From the boardroom to the loan office, the Credit Union of Colorado supports a green initiative to reduce the company's impact on the environment—and the data center is no exception. When adopting the Compellent SAN, Cowart knew support for virtualized storage would be essential to reducing power consumption and consolidating the company's computing environment. Compellent aggregates physical drives into a single pool of virtual storage to quickly and easily support hundreds of VMware® virtual servers with no wasted capacity.

“With Compellent's virtualized storage, we can bring things online fast,” says Cowart. We can boot from the SAN, and then we can mount that boot volume to a VMware virtual server or even another piece of hardware at another site.” Cowart estimates that this new virtual data center will help the Credit Union of Colorado eliminate 50 percent of its physical servers—a huge savings in terms of power and cooling costs.

With Compellent's advanced thin provisioning capabilities, the Credit Union of Colorado extends the benefits of its green initiative by eliminating the need to buy excess unused storage. Compellent's Dynamic Capacity allows Cowart to allocate any size of virtual volume, consuming capacity only as data is actually written. Free Space Recovery, available with Enterprise Manager, enables deleted file space in a Windows environment to be returned to the Compellent virtualized pool of storage. “Free Space Recovery alone is a feature that makes Enterprise Manager worth every penny,” says Cowart. “We’ve been able to reclaim 10 to 20 percent of our disk space which is huge.”

EASY-TO-USE REPLICATION

Compellent's Remote Instant Replay™ replicates snapshots of critical systems between the primary SAN and a remote site, ensuring business continuity and data protection at a fraction of the cost of other replication solutions. Cowart uses the bandwidth optimization feature during normal working hours to limit the impact on performance, and then increases bandwidth at night to accelerate the replication process.

“Every morning, I have a new backup that's sitting at my other site, and I'm confident our member's financial information is protected,” says Cowart. “If I need to restore an Exchange volume or bring a financial database online from the remote site, I can do it in minutes—without the need to deal with tape, and without the cost of an additional software package.”

After implementing the SAN and reaping its benefits, Cowart considers ease of use to be the defining asset of Compellent's rich portfolio of features. “It's beautiful. Once a volume is set up and the automated tools are in place, your data becomes an easily managed commodity,” he says. “The depth and simplicity of the Compellent SAN gives us enterprise-level storage that can be managed by a single employee.”