

The German State Tax Authority selects Open-E as its central storage solution

The computing center in Düsseldorf will utilize an Open-E Data Storage Server to securely store the financial data of citizens in North Rhine-Westphalia

Puchheim/Munich, Germany - June 26, 2008 – Open-E is a leading developer of innovative storage management software. Working together with partners BASIS and Tarox, Open-E recently won a major contract to provide software for the tax authorities of the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia. The project involved installing and launching the operation of 150 systems based on the Open-E Data Storage Server throughout this German state – and the work had to be completed in just a few weeks. Once complete, it provided the Tax Authorities with more than 1.8 PB (1,800 TB) of reliable storage capacity for their residents' financial data.

“This project was very demanding on the Open-E storage solution, the project managers at BASIS, and those responsible for coordinating the installation,” stated Ruth Philipp, Marketing and Sales Director of Open-E. *“First we had to adapt the Data Storage Server to the tax authorities' requirements and then the whole system had to be installed and launched for operation in just five weeks. Everyone involved performed at a superhuman level and brought the project to a successful conclusion.”*

When the project started, the computing center in Düsseldorf, which is responsible for all the revenue offices in the entire state, required the delivery of a high performance replacement for its overloaded and obsolete data storage solution without any interruption of ongoing operations. They had several alternatives from which to choose: Among the possibilities discussed were new tape-based technologies and centralized or decentralized disk tape libraries (DTLs).

The challenge

The computing center is responsible not only for operations at the state's 200 departments, but also for backing up and archiving data at each of the field offices. In the past, all data was backed up decentrally via the IT system at each individual office, using local linear tape-open (LTO) drives. But the volume of data, which has now reached more than 500 GB per backup, exceeded the systems' capabilities. In addition, backing up the data required an unacceptable length of time.

Implementation

Following a public call for bids and the internal testing of the systems according to the state's budget requirements, the Open-E solution was selected in conjunction with a storage server from Intel. The first expansion stage provided 6 TB of storage. Twelve SATA hard drives in a RAID-5 array with hot spares and parity were utilized and can be expanded at any time. At the highest expansion level, the systems can handle up to 1764 TB (nearly 1.8 PB), giving the client an ideal amount of scalability and tremendous potential for growth.

The systems enable parallel access to the systems as they are backed up, thereby increasing performance and giving the computing center access to perform archiving tasks while back-up operations are in process. **BASIS made additional adjustments in order to meet all of the client's requirements.**

Both the size of the system and the speed with which it was brought into operation were very impressive. **Partner Tarox** rolled out nearly 150 systems in just five weeks, an achievement that demanded a highly-detailed and tactically-refined strategy from everyone involved. Within a period of about one month, three installation teams set up and brought into operation approximately ten systems every week across nearly 200 departments.

"After a few initial challenges, the individual partners worked together so well that they were able to bring the systems into operation in just a few weeks," said Andreas Hedderich, IT director at the Düsseldorf computing center. *"Everyone involved in the project handled their responsibilities in such a professional way that we experienced no delays from the time the configuration files were generated at our location until the installation in the departments."*

Summary

After approximately three months of regular production, the client has stated that the solution meets all of its requirements. Initial concerns about using solutions that originate from several different vendors have been completely discredited.

"This project has once again shown that public agencies and private enterprises can work together very efficiently and that it is possible to handle projects of this size with medium-sized companies," said Mr. Hedderich.

About NRW's computing center

The North Rhine-Westphalia Finance Computing Center is an official service provider for the State Ministry of Finance. It works in conjunction with regional tax offices, which in turn manage local tax authorities.

The computing center currently serves 137 tax offices, two regional offices, and three educational institutes for the state's financial administration organization. Accordingly, the 600 employees of the

center serve 32,000 others around the state. In order to keep up with this volume and to simultaneously successfully launch new technologies and solutions, the computing center must select reliable and professional partners when awarding contracts.

About Open-E

Open-E is a leading vendor and innovative software company for IP-based storage management software with headquarters in the United States and Europe. The Open-E DSS, NAS-R3, and iSCSI-R3 product lines are aimed primarily at small and medium-sized companies. These products have earned an international reputation for outstanding performance, flexibility, reliability, scalability, and return-on-investment. Open-E GmbH is headquartered in Puchheim, near Munich, where it performs development, European sales, and marketing activities. Software from Open-E is extensively tested and delivers an extremely-high performance level. It has a very straightforward structure and gives system integrators the ability to construct massive, stable, secure, and easily-configurable storage systems.

Open-E distributes its products through a global network of partners that has an outstanding presence within the markets for storage and network systems. For more information about Open-E and its products, please visit www.open-e.com.

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