Frankfurter Volksbank

FRANKFURTER VOLKSBANK | PROBLEM SOLVED

Using NetApp and ProLion solutions, the bank built a zero-loss data infrastructure which supports compliance with German and EU security regulations.

Frankfurter Volksbank at the Cutting Edge of IT with NetApp Solutions

Frankfurter Volksbank eG has a history of over 150 years and strong ties with the Frankfurt/Rhein-Main region of Germany. With close to 200,000 members and more than 80 branches, the cooperative bank fosters close relationships with its customers and positions itself as a bank for medium-sized businesses that also solves global challenges. When it comes to its data infrastructure, Frankfurter Volksbank relies on NetApp®.

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Steffen Nagel
Head of IT, Frankfurter Volksbank

UPGRADING THE DATA INFRASTRUCTURE

Frankfurter Volksbank operates an IT infrastructure focused on database applications and file services for its approximately 1,350 users. Head of IT Steffen Nagel and a team of 18 handle the day-to-day operations and requirements of different specialist departments, and are responsible for implementing German and EU regulatory directives. The pressure is particularly high when it comes to information security and disaster management. "We needed to increase the availability of our data landscape without increasing complexity or effort," explains Nagel.

Frankfurter Volksbank has been using NetApp solutions since 2008, and it has all gone very well. "Our experience with NetApp in terms of reliability has been fantastic, but we needed to go one step further," says Nagel. "A new strategy with NetApp MetroCluster® promised mirrored systems and automated failover in real time, and thus the needed high availability."

DESIGNED FOR ZERO DATA LOSS

Systems vendor SVA provided hands-on support. "SVA is an excellent and highly competent partner," says Nagel. "The suggestion to combine NetApp MetroCluster with ClusterLion was worth a mint. Even if an error prompts a failover, the process will run 100% automatically." Tests have already impressed Nagel: "No matter how many times we forced a failover, there was no disruption, not even for a millisecond. Combining MetroCluster and ClusterLion is a simple solution and it works."

ClusterLion eliminates the availability risk caused by power failures and, by extension, the risk of split brain and data loss due to irretrievably inconsistent data logic. In addition, ClusterLion continuously monitors the storage cluster's power supply, interconnects, and services, and independently initiates a failover in the event of a power failure, ensuring that critical IT services remain available. ClusterLion responds completely independently of the data center's power and network infrastructure while also protecting MetroCluster in the event of a total data center failure.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Long service life that protects investment
- Simplified backup management
- Extensively automated production environment
- Minimal management
- Quickly provide documentation required for regulatory transparency
- Comply with regulatory directives for information security

HYBRID STORAGE WITH CLUSTERED DATA ONTAP

With the new MetroCluster solution implemented across two data centers, Clustered Data ONTAP® and NetApp hybrid storage came on board. "The way NetApp managed migration of the operating system and transfer of data to the new system was just fantastic," says Nagel.

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"The whole migration process was handled by a tool which saved us weeks of preparation. A dry run also allowed us to eliminate the last few error sources. That's exactly what IT should be like—reproducible and highly automated. One of the reasons the cutover worked so well was down to exceptional project management and the experienced team of engineers from SVA and NetApp."

The backup system was also redesigned. Cleondris DataManager extends NetApp Snapshot™ technology and integrates with it perfectly. Now, it is possible to easily manage all backups of VMware machines using a single GUI. In just a few clicks, virtual machines can be fully restored or partially relocated to another machine. Databases are backed up daily. File snapshots are taken every four hours, so users can choose from a number of different versions. Self-service will be an option in the future.

A QUANTUM LEAP FOR DATA MANAGEMENT

The switch to Clustered Data ONTAP has certainly been worthwhile. The newly implemented Flash Pool™ function enables frequently used data to be automatically cached on flash media. Together with 10 GbE, this has a very positive impact on virtual environment and VMware vMotion performance. Apart from a relatively flat learning curve, other benefits include out-of-the-box monitoring delivered by NetApp OnCommand® tools. Almost as soon as it was configured, the environment began to automatically provide initial data on performance, capacity, etc.

"Clustered Data ONTAP is a quantum leap. Instead of being reactive, we can now be proactive," explains Nagel. "The system is self learning. It generates a baseline for the normal state and reports any deviations. With the entire cause-effect chain available at a glance, it allows corrective action to be implemented straightaway. This makes data management a complete pleasure."

FRANKFURTER VOLKSBANK CAN EASILY MEET REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS AND COMPLY WITH STANDARDS SUCH AS COBIT AND ISO27001.

The new ONTAP solution improved cost effectiveness. Nagel is anticipating an operating life of at least five years, including maintenance. The fact that the existing systems can still be used shows the solution's real potential. They have been upgraded to Clustered Data ONTAP and are now serving as test environments.

STATE-OF-THE-ART INFORMATION SECURITY

Thanks to high reliability, disaster management, and short restore times, the new infrastructure has enabled Frankfurter Volksbank to meet regulatory requirements while complying with standards such as COBIT and ISO27001. Fulfilling obligations in relation to documentation is very

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straightforward. Take the migration to Clustered Data ONTAP, for example: All of the necessary documentation, including log files, can be printed out, ready for filing, at the touch of a button, thus saving considerable time and effort.

"A zero-data-loss infrastructure that complies with all security regulations for the banking sector would have been impossible for us using the old methods. Costs and workloads would have gotten completely out of hand. NetApp systems are essentially foolproof and offer so much in terms of automation and streamlining. This really helps me sleep at night. And with two to three employees, we have everything in control," concludes Steffen Nagel.

SOLUTION COMPONENTS

NETAPP PRODUCTS

NetApp FAS8020 4-node MetroCluster

NetApp FAS2554 (Backup)

2 NetApp FAS2240 (Test)

NetApp Clustered Data ONTAP, Flash Pool, OnCommand Tools, SnapRestore, SnapVault

ENVIRONMENT

Cleondris DataManager, Microsoft Fileservices, Microsoft SQL Server, Linux, ProLion ClusterLion, VMware vSphere

PARTNER

SVA System Vertrieb Alexander GmbH

Image: Frankfurter Volksbank eG

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