By turning to NetApp, BT TV has found a solution that guarantees its customers service delivery uptime

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Industry
Broadband and TV service provider

The Challenge
Replace legacy storage platform, which was causing service outages, with one that would support growing numbers of customers using VOD and live streaming services.

The Solution
Implement NetApp FAS8040 All Flash FAS® to support live streaming and NetApp FAS8020 for VOD and general purpose support.

Benefits
- Lightning fast performance
- Guaranteed service delivery uptime and availability
- Risk of service outage now minimised
- Reliability that enables refinement of business services
- Improved customer satisfaction and reduced customer churn

Customer Profile

BT TV is a subscription service provided by the BT Group. Delivered on the YouView platform, it provides on-demand content and a wide raft of channels ranging from movies and children's programming to light entertainment, documentaries, and news.

The services are delivered through IPTV, which means subscribers access the services through the BT broadband Internet service. It also provides sports programming through BT Sport and, relatively recently, made a significant investment in football programming by acquiring the rights for the UK Premier League, the European Champions League, and other high-profile sporting events such as rugby and cricket.

The company has close to 4.5 million subscribers, and the acquisition of the football rights, in particular, led to the strengthening of the existing customer base. On-demand TV is an important component in the company's offering, and it provides a number of on-demand services, including sports, drama, children's TV, movies, and music.

The Challenge

The company operates in a fiercely competitive market that is illustrated by its exclusive rights to the Champions League over three seasons, and the sister tournament, the Europa league. The company wanted to make sure the services it delivered were as faultless as possible. This meant that it should not be prone to outages, especially in the areas of video on demand (VOD) and live streaming.

BT TV was seeking to minimise the risk of service outage that could occur due to the demands on its platform. Philip Buckley-Mellor, BT TV designer, "There's clearly a growing trend in which people watch what they want to when they want to, rather than at pre-set, scheduled times. This places a huge demand on VOD, and we wanted to strengthen our VOD service. In the past we have experienced category one outages, which meant either viewers couldn't access the service or it simply slowed down and stopped. Given the huge popularity of sports programming and the growth in our customer base, it was imperative we addressed this issue."

"The customer satisfaction surveys we carried out in last year show dramatic improvements compared to previous."

Philip Buckley-Mellor
BT TV Designer, BT TV

The Solution

He explains, "We were using another vendor's storage technology to support VOD, but I was keen to move to a NetApp platform. I felt confident that it would deliver the consistent performance we needed."

Buckley-Mellor was tasked with replacing the existing storage technology and turned to NetApp® FAS8040 AFF and FAS8020. "I had long, detailed conversations with NetApp, which gave me enormous confidence, and it was clear the technology was fit for our purpose."

For instance, the performance potential of NetApp FAS8040 AFF made it ideal to support live streaming, while FAS8020 could provide general-purpose support for VOD while also supporting data centre consolidation.

Alongside lightning fast performance, the All Flash FAS8040 comes with the NetApp Data ONTAP® operating system and advanced data management and data protection tools. This enables absolute focus on uptime and availability, further strengthened with comprehensive but easy management.

NetApp FAS8020 is designed to accelerate business operations while also delivering good TCO. It could easily support and meet BT TV's VOD capacity requirements, providing serious performance gains when compared to the legacy platform.

Business Benefits

Blistering performance, guaranteed service

The NetApp platform has enabled BT TV to meet its uptime and availability objectives with ease, supporting both live streaming and VOD. Buckley-Mellor says, "Our goal was to build up the IPTV service with a product we can rely on, and we have achieved that absolutely. The performance gains are incredible. We estimate a 40x performance gain for file replication when compared to the previous platform."

Improved business model

As the reliability and performance of the NetApp technology ensures outage-free VOD and live streaming, the company is able to refine and improve its business model. "It's actually changing the way we work and the services we offer. Because we can rely on the NetApp technology without hesitation, it is allowing us to actually adapt and make changes to the way we do business. In fact, the all-flash array provides us with more capacity than we need, but this clearly works in our favour too," adds Buckley-Mellor.

Customer satisfaction

Buckley-Mellor points out that following the implementation of the new storage platform to support VOD and live streaming, customer satisfaction levels have climbed significantly. "The customer satisfaction surveys we carried out in last year show dramatic improvements compared to previous."

> "It's actually changing the way we work and the services we offer. Because we can rely on the NetApp technology without hesitation, it is allowing us to actually refine the services we offer because we know we are not going to be hit by outages."

Philip Buckley-Mellor
BT TV Designer, BT TV

Good for handhelds

With the rapid rise of mobile computing from smart phones to tablets, BT TV wanted to make sure that its services could be effortlessly and reliably delivered to mobile devices used by customers. The NetApp platform enables the reliable delivery of VOD and live streaming to mobile devices, further galvanising its business and strengthening customer relationships.

Partnering with confidence

A further point made by Buckley-Mellor is the "peerless support" received from NetApp. He says, "The products are impressive for sure, but the support provided by NetApp is equally impressive. Lots of detailed information is readily available, and you can have long, detailed conversations with the NetApp staff, who understand your business needs, which breeds confidence. You get a lot more than it says on the tin."

SOLUTION COMPONENTS

- NetApp FAS8040 AFF
- NetApp FAS8020

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