

IP Telecom of Portugal provides cloud services to business customers, some of whom voiced concerns with lagging performance delays in some application response times. By installing a FlashArray from Pure Storage®, both application performance and customer satisfaction have increased, and IP Telecom can now offer high-performance services at no additional cost.



BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

IP Telecom can now offer the performance benefits of all-flash storage to its cloud-services customers without having to raise prices, creating a significant competitive advantage, while also reducing operational costs, improving business agility and increasing user satisfaction.

GEO

Portugal

INDUSTRY

Telecommunications and IT Services

“With Pure Storage, the system almost administers itself.”

Filipe Frasquilho,
Chief Technology Officer

IP TELECOM OF PORTUGAL GAINS COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN CLOUD SERVICES WITH PURE STORAGE

IP Telecom is the telecommunications arm of Infraestruturas de Portugal, a company formed in 2015 by the merger of Portugal’s road and railways networks. Together, the conglomerate pursues an integrated approach to leveraging infrastructure as a catalyst for economic development.

IP Telecom operates a network of some 5,000 km of fiber-optic cable, and provides hosting and cloud services from its three data centers in Lisbon, Oporto and Viseu, to more than 100 business customers in both the public and private sectors. “We offer infrastructure-as-a-service, providing our customers with a virtual data center that combines compute, storage and memory on how they can best configure their systems,” said Filipe Frasquilho, Chief Technology Officer for IP Telecom.

For several years, those cloud services have been based on virtualized servers running VMware vSphere.

A SEARCH FOR BETTER STORAGE PERFORMANCE

In early 2016, the company’s IT staff was concerned that some of its old storage systems were performing below the service-level objectives it wanted to deliver to customers. “We were seeing latency, IOPS and bandwidth numbers that resulted in performance that neither we nor our customers wanted,” Frasquilho recalled. “We diagnosed the problem down to our current storage arrays and decided we needed to change our storage infrastructure to improve our customer performance experience.”

IP Telecom’s system-integration partner, Intsis, suggested it consider Pure Storage, citing the potential benefits of its products and business model. IP Telecom arranged two proof-of-concept (POC) trials, each lasting a month, to compare the performance of solutions from the top-rated suppliers in Gartner’s Magic Quadrant. Pure Storage was one of them.

The POC included a Virtual Storage Infrastructure (VSI) environment and production workloads from the management infrastructure and the virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) used by the IT support department.

“We wanted to evaluate several performance criteria for each solution, and determine how easy it was to manage,” said Teresa Correia, a systems administrator who led the search for a new storage solution. “In terms of latency, IOPS and bandwidth, the two

COMPANY:

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USE CASE:

- Virtual Datacenter Infrastructure (VDC) – VMware® vCloud® Director and vSphere®

CHALLENGES:

- Lagging storage performance negatively impacted some applications among some cloud-services customers.
- Firmware upgrades always required performance downgrades and exposed IP Telecom to possible SLA penalties.

IT TRANSFORMATION:

- Resolved customer complaints about sub-par performance.
- High data-reduction rates reduce data-center operating costs.
- Increased number of customers receiving the performance benefits of all-flash.

“We can offer higher performance to our customers without raising our prices, and that gives us a competitive advantage.”

Filipe Frasilho,
 Chief Technology Officer

products exceeded the performance of our legacy platform. What swung the decision in favor of Pure Storage was the higher de-duplication and data-compression rates, and its effortless management.”

Based on the clear results from the POC, IP Telecom purchased a FlashArray//M series and installed it in the Viseu data center, where most of the problems with storage performance had occurred.

EFFORTLESS MANAGEMENT FREES UP IT STAFF

The benefits of the Pure Storage array have been noticed by the IT staff.

“Pure Storage is very easy to manage,” Correia observed. “You don’t need a lot of specialized knowledge and you don’t have to consult a 300-page manual. Our VMware manager can also easily manage the storage, taking advantage of the close integration between Pure and VMware.”

Frasquilho added, “With Pure Storage, the system almost administers itself. That is important for an agile IT department like ours, because it frees up staff to do other, more valuable functions, like focus on customer needs. That saves time, money and enables us to focus on business innovation.”

Correia is especially grateful that upgrades to Pure Storage arrays are accomplished non-disruptively. “With our previous storage vendors, firmware upgrades always meant performance downgrades, and that is never a good thing when you are in the business of providing always-available compute services. With Pure, we never have had any interruption in production and user experience.”

PURE STORAGE PROVIDES BETTER VALUE FOR CUSTOMERS

The de-duplication and data-compression features of Pure Storage arrays also score highly with IP Telecom, which has observed data-reduction ratios greater than 3:1, depending on the nature of a customer’s applications and data.

The impact of such high data reduction is felt by IP Telecom in two ways. First, “it saves us significantly on floor space and power costs in the data center,” Frasilho noted. More significantly, “we can offer higher performance to our customers without raising our prices, and that gives us a competitive advantage in attracting and keeping customers.”

IMPROVED STORAGE PROVIDES ASSURED SERVICE LEVELS

To achieve more demanding performance levels, “our initial decision was to adopt all-flash storage,” Correia said. “Our supplier proposed several different approaches, but we wanted to see what else was available in the market.”

“In 90% of the cases where customers had complaints, the problems were resolved with the installation of the Pure Storage array,” Frasilho noted. In the remaining cases, the problems were attributed to issues unrelated to storage. “We’ve had several customers tell us the performance is much better, and it is rare to hear from them when things go well.”

EVERGREEN MODEL REDUCES COSTS

Frasquilho said that another significant factor in favor of Pure Storage was the Pure Evergreen™ Storage business model, which guarantees that customers will always have the latest technology and features without forklift upgrades, thus preserving their investment for 10 years or more. “Evergreen is a very good way of providing support,” he said. “It gives us the ability to add storage whenever we need to and always protects the investments we have made.”

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Teresa Correia, *System Administrator*

He added, “We don’t want to have to change infrastructure every three or four years, or do painful data migrations. We want to stay with the same technology platform, but also see that technology evolve while protecting our investment. Evergreen does that. I’ve never seen anything like it from any other vendor.”

PURE STORAGE PROVIDES GREATER COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

On its one Pure Storage array, he noted, “we currently occupy 1.13TB of capacity, yet we have the ability to offer 16TB of usable capacity to customers and still deliver excellent performance.”

Within the next year, Frasquilho said, “we want to put all workloads and applications on flash, and now that they have seen what Pure Storage delivers, our customers want that, too.”



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