

Emmelibri requires top-grade performance from its IT systems to support the broad range of its subsidiaries' activities. When a better storage solution was required, it chose Pure Storage FlashArray™ storage arrays, which have dramatically improved the performance of key applications while reducing operating costs and greatly simplifying storage management.

**BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION**

Dramatically improved performance of key applications has boosted productivity across the company and its subsidiaries. Noticeable savings in operating costs. IT personnel can focus on higher-value tasks.

GEO

Italy

INDUSTRY

Retail

“We strongly believe that flash technology is the way forward and Pure Storage is the perfect partner for the journey. We are proud to work with Pure Storage and embrace storage innovation.”

Luca Paleari, CIO

WITH PURE STORAGE, EMMELIBRI WRITES A NEW CHAPTER IN INNOVATION

Emmelibri is a holding company that directs a large book-distribution ecosystem. Its subsidiaries cover all aspects of book commerce: wholesale distribution, mass-market retail, bookshop chains and e-commerce websites. Emmelibri is a branch of Gruppo Messaggerie, a company active since 1914 that is involved in the production or distribution of 30% of all books in Italy.

Emmelibri acts as a service company for its subsidiaries, including provision of the IT infrastructure. Employing more than 600 virtual machines, it manages publicly available tools such as the largest Italian e-commerce website for books and the only comprehensive database of Italian books in print, out of print and in process.

The IT infrastructure managed by Emmelibri needs to be extremely powerful, reliable and flexible in order to deliver high-quality service without interruptions and satisfy the different needs of all the companies involved. Delivering that level of service came at a very high cost, so the company was looking for ways to reduce data-center expenditures without sacrificing performance or service reliability.

Emmelibri also was looking to complete the full virtualization of its data center, a step considered for years but not yet taken because the company could not find a storage infrastructure that was reliable and powerful enough to ensure a painless execution.

GREATER PERFORMANCE, SIMPLER MANAGEMENT

Emmelibri asked its system-integration partner, ICT Logic, for help in finding a cost-effective storage solution that could guarantee top-class performance. ICT suggested Pure Storage as the solution.

The promise of consistent sub-millisecond latency was a crucial feature, as it would ensure a flawless and fast work experience on the over 600 virtual machines consolidated on 15 hosts that Emmelibri manages. Even though the company was used to top-class storage solutions, this constituted a sizable performance improvement.

Equally interesting was the Pure1™ web-based management system. It removed all the complexity issues that are inherent with other storage providers, saving the time and energy of the IT department and allowing it to focus on higher-value tasks.

COMPANY:

Emmelibri
www.emmelibri.it

USE CASE:

- Database – Microsoft® SQL Server, Oracle® MySQL™, PostgreSQL®, MongoDB®, SAP®

CHALLENGES:

- Maintaining a high-level storage infrastructure was extremely expensive.
- Legacy storage was unable to support the full virtualization of the data center.

IT TRANSFORMATION:

- 2 – 8x faster data processing dramatically improves the usage experience of end-users.
- Consistent sub-millisecond latency enables optimal performance of the company's 600 virtual machines.
- Simple and intuitive IT management tools free up staff, allowing them to focus on higher-value tasks.

“We are seriously considering to fully virtualize our data center. With a different storage provider that would be out of question.”

Luca Paleari, CIO

The Pure Evergreen™ Storage program also was a major contribution to the selection of Pure Storage, as it guaranteed Emmelibri that its storage infrastructure would retain exceptional performance. Hardware and software can be upgraded, instead of being replaced, which protects the company's investment over the long term. And with Pure Storage non-disruptive upgrades, updates cause no downtime or loss of performance, and require no data migration.

While Emmelibri was attracted to the long list of features offered by Pure Storage, to confirm its decision it took advantage of the Love Your Storage no-obligation trial period offered by Pure Storage. The Pure Storage FlashArray lived up to the expectations and in many respects went far beyond them, beginning with the deployment.

“Deployment is usually the most critical moment, as arrays generally require special arrangements. GUIs and CLIs are quite rocky and the execution of configuration commands takes forever,” said Luca Paleari, CIO of Emmelibri. “Pure Storage made all of that a thing of the past. With the tools provided by Pure1, configuration was easy and quick. Within three weeks our 120 TB data center was entirely migrated.”

The company's management was impressed, too. The trial period made clear that the Pure Storage FlashArray was a reliable and practical solution, as well as an improvement over the already excellent performance Emmelibri was used to.

“Innovation is part of our company's DNA,” Paleari added. “We strive to always be on the forefront in order to deliver optimal IT services, which translate into optimal book distribution. We strongly believe that flash technology is the way forward and Pure Storage is the perfect partner for the journey. We are proud to work with Pure Storage and embrace storage innovation.”

AN INNOVATIVE STORAGE INFRASTRUCTURE OPENS NEW POSSIBILITIES

Emmelibri now uses two Pure Storage FlashArrays in replication as the only storage units in its data center, supporting all the company's workloads.

The new storage infrastructure has provided Emmelibri and its subsidiaries with new levels of performance. Processing of key applications is now 2 – 8x faster, and data deduplication ratios have reached 6:1, giving the company much more storage for its money. End-users and IT personnel alike have been impressed by the dramatically improved performance. In some cases, applications were running so fast that employees assumed tasks were not being completed correctly, and their help-desk complaints turned into congratulations.

The performance and reliability of the Pure Storage FlashArray, together with the simplicity of the management tools provided, convinced Emmelibri to take the final step towards the full virtualization of its data center.

“Currently, 95% of our data center is virtualized. This includes all sorts of workloads, from Oracle databases to PostgreSQL databases, MongoDB, SAP EP and SAP BW,” Paleari said. “The remaining 5% is composed of our core SAP ERP systems, namely SAP ECC and SAP PI with a 4 TB Oracle database. We have been thinking about virtualizing them for years, but we never found a storage solution that allowed us to make the leap with confidence.

“After moving to Pure Storage, we made some experiments. We set up a Linux virtual machine and migrated production data there. The performance was impressive: after the virtualization, critical reports were completed in 2 hours instead of the usual 7. That is why we are now planning to fully virtualize our data center. Pure Storage is enabling us

to take the leap towards full SAP virtualization with confidence: with a different storage provider that would have been out of question. We are now going to move SAP ECC and SAP PI to a VMware private cloud.”

IMPROVED APPLICATION PERFORMANCE BOOSTS PRODUCTIVITY

As Paleari noted, the usage experience of SAP systems on Pure Storage has been excellent. There have been significant performance improvements, allowing the company’s staff to work much more efficiently. Many batch operations, including custom ones, are now completed up to 50% faster. The invoicing cycle has also sped up making delayed invoicing a thing of the past. Using storage cloning, Emmelibri has also been able to create a test environment as system copy, with considerable time and money savings.

Besides opening new possibilities, Pure Storage delivered the economic efficiency that Emmelibri was looking for. The new arrays, including technical support and updates, cost roughly as much as the legacy system cost in maintenance alone. Moreover, the storage performance and the technological updates provided by Pure Storage allowed Emmelibri to double the amortization of its units from 3 to 6 years. The rack footprint is now 8% of what it used to be with the legacy system, which saves space and reduces energy and cooling expenses.

To the company’s IT department, the most impressive feature of the new storage infrastructure is the drastic decrease in man-hours required to manage it. Emmelibri has calculated an 80% drop, courtesy of the Pure1 management system that has made operations effortless. Moreover, the IT department is receiving less support requests on critical applications, giving technicians the time and energy needed to focus on the full virtualization of the company’s data center.

Adopting Pure Storage satisfied all the needs Emmelibri had: reliability and flexibility, top performances and simplicity of management. All of that for a fraction of the cost the company used to pay for its legacy solution, with the added benefit of free technological updates.

That is why, when asked to sum up how Pure Storage impacted his company’s work, Paleari has no doubt: “Euphoria! Everybody is happy. Migration was quick and painless, performance is very high and management is easy.”

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info@purestorage.com
www.purestorage.com/customers