

Square Enix, a leading global developer, publisher and distributor of branded entertainment content, demands high levels of performance and availability from its storage systems to support the ever-increasing complexity of the development environment. As the first Japanese company to install the Pure FlashBlade™ product, Square Enix has experienced dramatically increased performance, simplified management, and higher availability.

SQUARE ENIX

BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

The company refreshed its network storage to provide a more flexible system environment with higher capacity, higher performance, and higher availability.

GEO

Japan

INDUSTRY

Information and Communication

“FlashBlade is a solution that delivers extremely high throughput, and we expect to expand its use to other applications.”

Hironobu Murakami,
Assistant Group Manager
and Technical Specialist

FLASHBLADE FROM PURE STORAGE DELIVERS HIGH-PERFORMANCE, SIMPLIFIED MANAGEMENT TO SQUARE ENIX

With corporate philosophy of spreading happiness across the globe by providing unforgettable experiences, the Square Enix brand is well known for prominent game titles such as the “Final Fantasy” and “Dragon Quest” series, as well as other entertainment products. The company’s lines of business include development and sales of video games, online services, publishing, and merchandising. As a recognized pioneer and leader in the digital entertainment industry, Square Enix continues to innovate with new developments in gaming consoles, the Internet, and smart devices, and invests in technology that enables improved stability and efficiency to accelerate content developments and service deployments.

“A variety of systems are required for content developments and service deployments,” said Mr. Kazuhiro Kasai, Manager of the IT Infrastructure Backend Systems Group. “Our Information Systems Division’s mission is selecting the right equipment and technology, ensuring the quality, and overseeing the installation and operations while considering overall business impact.” Mr. Kasai’s group, which is mainly responsible for the backend of online games, constantly monitors the latest technology trends and incorporates them into its environment whenever appropriate and in alignment with the rapidly changing gaming market.

In early 2017, the group installed the FlashBlade all-flash storage solution from Pure Storage to support its mission-critical workloads. Square Enix was the first company in Japan to install FlashBlade, which replaced its legacy NFS storage system that was no longer able to adequately meet the company’s capacity and performance needs.

Mr. Hironobu Murakami, Assistant Group Manager and Technical Specialist, commented, “The volume of archive logs continually increased, which strained the capacity of our previous storage system. To compensate for this, the internal users had to compress logs before saving this data, which was time-consuming. There was also a need for users to gather and analyze logs to obtain useful knowledge for the future service deployment, however, the capacity of disk-based NFS storage was too tight to accommodate the demand. We wanted to provide a more flexible backend with higher-capacity, better-performing network storage for users who engage in system development from the service side.”

COMPANY:

Square Enix Co., Ltd
www.jp.square-enix.com

USE CASE:

- Virtual server infrastructure

CHALLENGES:

- Legacy storage had reached its limits of capacity and performance.
- Users required greater performance and flexibility from storage.

IT TRANSFORMATION:

- FlashBlade solution provides unmatched capacity and performance with highly attractive return on investment.
- Non-disruptive software upgrades reduce maintenance demands and minimize impact on business operations.

“While all-flash storage is offered by other companies, Pure Storage is unique in delivering both capital and operating cost savings. FlashBlade breaks new ground for shared storage for mission-critical enterprise applications.”

Shinichiro Eto,
*Assistant Group Manager
 and Technical Specialist*

Square Enix decided to be an early adopter of FlashBlade after having a positive experience with FlashArray. According to Mr. Murakami, “FlashArray™ was a highly competitive product in terms of both performance and cost. I have never had any trouble with its operation.” Mr. Shinichiro Eto, Assistant Group Manager and Technical Specialist, added, “Given the successful installation of FlashArray, our confidence in Pure Storage grew out of a recognition that its products are built for our mission-critical system requirements. We realized it made sense to evaluate FlashBlade as well.”

MULTIPLE WORKLOADS MOVED ONTO FLASH

To evaluate the performance of FlashBlade, Square Enix conducted a test in which data-intensive workloads from several servers hit the storage simultaneously. With the company’s legacy storage system, IOPS and latency showed numbers representing its performance limits. When the test was run on FlashBlade, “we were not able to reach its performance limits,” Mr. Murakami said.

In addition to outstanding performance, Mr. Murakami emphasized the value of non-disruptive software upgrades on FlashBlade. Previously, system downtime for upgrading storage software was a major problem. “Eliminating the disruption associated with upgrading will be a major advantage through the verification and post-deployment operations,” he said. “In our previous environment, a software update took more than 30 minutes of downtime, but FlashBlade can be updated with minimal disruption in our services.”

“FlashBlade is a solution that delivers extremely high throughput, and we expect to expand its use in our environment,” Mr. Murakami commented. Mr. Eto added, “FlashBlade breaks new ground for shared storage for mission-critical enterprise applications. While all-flash storage is offered by other companies as well, Pure Storage is unique in delivering both capital and operating cost savings. Their products are applicable to any area where high performance and stability are required.”



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