PURESTORAGE®

Occam, a UK-based data-driven marketing agency, considers it vital to perform real-time marketing in line with increasing client demands and expectations. However, its datacentre was nearing capacity and the incumbent solution wasn't processing data at the rate needed. Occam turned to Pure Storage and its all-flash technology to meet the requirements, and included the future-proof Evergreen Storage model.

Occam

BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

Occam helps its clients better connect their marketing with customers and prospects. A Pure Storage FlashArray//M50 is giving Occam speeds it could previously only dream of, with ease of management and simplicity of maintenance a real added bonus.

GEO

United Kingdom

INDUSTRY

Technology

"It's not very often that your engineers will get very excited about storage, but all of them love Pure Storage — it's now more a thing they *want* to talk about rather than have to talk about."

Tom Luxon, *Infrastructure Manager*

STORAGE IS THE BACKBONE OF OCCAM'S BUSINESS, BUT SPINNING DISK WASN'T DOING THE JOB

Occam is a UK-based agency specialising in data-driven marketing for around 20 years, employing around 134 people. It provides data marketing services for organisations like the RAC, JLR and Northern Rail, delivering insights and demographics which these customers can make use of and potentially help them improve their offerings.

The nature of Occam's business means it needs to process, match, merge and sort client data that can take up terabytes of space. Occam's datacentre was nearing capacity, which meant that it was time to upgrade to a solution that matched its needs, providing a platform which allowed overlaid technology solutions to perform at their best.

"Storage is one of the backbones of our business," said Occam Infrastructure Manager Tom Luxon. "If we don't have a good storage system, we can't ultimately process data in a timely fashion for our customers. That could directly mean the difference between a client getting a sale or not — if we can't process information fast enough for them, they might miss out on an opportunity."

Before working with Pure Storage, Occam was using a conventional spinning disk storage system, which consumed a large amount of rackspace and power. There were increasing maintenance costs without added benefit, with related tasks intrusive and sometimes disruptive.

Luxon said, "One of the main reasons for moving away from traditional spinning disk storage was that we were getting increased client database build times. Data volumes and frequency of change is increasing in line with changes in technology and industry trends, we were approaching a point where spinning disk storage could no longer keep up. We couldn't easily expand the spinning disk array, and its performance just couldn't keep up with demand. Before flash, options for expansion and alternative technology approaches were trialled, but they didn't meet our requirements."

ONLY ALL-FLASH STORAGE FROM PURE STORAGE COULD MEET OCCAM'S CLIENT AND SERVICE DEMANDS

All-flash storage was the only technology that could handle Occam's increasing client demands and provide better performance at the same time. It could also give Occam the ability to on-board new clients and continue to grow, while providing competitive advantage. Occam was immediately attracted to how the Pure Storage flash array could

COMPANY:

Occam
www.occam-dm.com

USE CASE:

- Database – Microsoft® SQL Server®
  and marketing applications

CHALLENGES:

- Conventional spinning disk array
  solution was unable to process data
  fast enough for its client's needs.
- Space, power, redundancy, scalability
  and upgrades presented challenges.
- Occam was unable to support client
  data growth and provide database
  build-outs in the requested time
  frames, due to incumbent
  storage infrastructure.
- Occam's datacentre was at capacity,
  and it needed a storage solution that
  would match its needs now and
  in the future, while reducing rack
  space and power consumption.

IT TRANSFORMATION:

- Faster client database build times,
  with a 60% increase in speed and
  the ability to perform real-time
  data processing.
- Pure Storage FlashArray//M50
  performance is incomparably better
  than the previous incumbent solution
  — sub-millisecond latencies and
  four gigabytes a second
  throughput observed.
- Pure Storage FlashArray//M50 needs
  less space than the previous spinning
  disk solution, resulting in a 75%
  reduction in required rack space.

"We can support our business
growth and customer
ambitions by delivering more
to them within higher SLAs."

Tom Luxon, *Infrastructure Manager*

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simplify and condense its storage platform, and how it could easily fit into its technology stack refresh. Occam selected the Pure Storage FlashArray//M50 for its immediate storage requirement.

"We primarily chose Pure Storage because of the service," said Luxon. "Not many vendors would make it so simple to trial one of its all-flash arrays, which was simple to set up, plug in, turn on and get going. In the past for us trialing a proof of concept could be quite time consuming, but it took only four to five hours for Pure Storage to turn up to the datacentre, and have the Pure Storage FlashArray//M50 live in our infrastructure.

FLASH STORAGE FROM PURE STORAGE MEANS REAL-TIME MARKETING AND TECH THAT ENGINEERS WANT TO TALK ABOUT

For the majority of clients, Occam uses Microsoft SQL Server to build SQL databases, a technology the company has used since the business started. With the Pure Storage FlashArray//M50, Occam now has faster client build times, with 60% increases in speed compared to the previous solution. Occam now has faster solution backups, and the ability to perform more real-time data processing.

"The performance of Pure Storage is incomparably better. We can now get sub-millisecond latency, and have observed throughputs of four gigabytes per second," Luxon said. "In one instance we saw a 900% increase in data suppression rates, and in one process we saw runtimes drop from 260 to 40 minutes. Our data reduction rates now average 3.3 to 1."

The Pure Storage FlashArray//M50 uses much less space than the incumbent solution, only taking 5U of space in a rack compared to four whole racks previously. Storage power consumption is also lower than before, with much less maintenance involved. The four people who manage the infrastructure at Occam now have time freed up for other projects, helping to clear the usual long IT backlogs of tasks. The agency is much more innovative with the technology stack it has purchased, with IT now able to focus more on business processes and automation.

Occam has plans around expanding and more than tripling the size of the storage environment. With Pure Storage it can do this easily, keeping the same configuration in terms of space, without disruption and the use of more power.

Luxon added, "It's not very often that your engineers will get very excited about a product, but all of them love Pure Storage — it's now more a thing they want to talk about rather than have to talk about."