

# The Pittsburgh Pirates: Infrastructure innovations, playing field benefits

## Major League Baseball team makes the move to flexible storage and desktop platforms

### Objective

Move to a flexible storage architecture to support massive growth of HD video files, and transition to a virtual desktop infrastructure

### Approach

Engage HPE Platinum Partner, All Lines Technology, to design and build next-generation systems that support the team

### IT Matters

- Delivers a scalable, flexible storage solution for new and emerging video formats
- Creates a centralized desktop environment for 96% faster endpoint deployments
- Eliminates complex server, storage, and network management tools
- Simplifies desktop management, reclaiming IT resources for innovation

### Business Matters

- Avoids forklift upgrades with simplified storage expansion options
- Boosts productivity profile for the organization, eliminating desktop maintenance
- Enables high-definition video workflow for improved player and scouting analysis
- Innovates both in the front office and on the playing field



On the left, Bill Balzer (Network Administrator) and right, Jeff Hammond (IT Operations Manager) of the Pittsburgh Pirates IT Staff.

## The business of baseball

Long before television rights, season ticket memberships, and luxury boxes, athletes were playing competitive baseball in the Pittsburgh area. Established in 1887, the Pittsburgh Pirates is one of the top five longest running Major League Baseball franchises in existence.

With five World Series Championships, 13 Hall of Famers, and more than 10,000 all-time wins, the Pirates are one of the most storied teams in professional sports.

It's an idea reflected in the team's motto: "Pride. Passion. Pittsburgh Pirates." But it takes more than pride and passion to operate a successful baseball business in 2016. The challenges faced by the Pirates are a unique blend of brand management and team development.

On top of managing communications, sales and marketing, finance and administration, ballpark operations, and major media contracts, a baseball team faces unique professional demands in the form of player development and talent scouting.

“For us, the HPE 3PAR solution is the right thing for our organization, because we rely so heavily on HD video. Now we have a scalable storage environment that can grow with us, regardless of what video formats come next.”

— Terry Zeigler, Senior Director of IT, Pittsburgh Pirates

### **The real cost of HD**

The evaluation and analysis of current and prospective players has been a video-intensive process for years. Capturing, tagging, aggregating, and editing player video helps coaches and trainers improve player performance and boost the brand.

Recently, the industry shifted to shooting video in high definition, which makes sense from a training perspective—capturing more details gives you a better understanding of the player’s performance. But the shift to HD wasn’t without its drawbacks.

“When we moved to HD video, we really started feeling the impact on our existing storage infrastructure,” recalls Terry Zeigler, senior director of IT for the Pirates. “In a typical baseball season, we find we’re using more than twice as much storage as we used to with our old digital video workflow.”

### **Scouting for solutions**

With the HD trend on the upswing, the move toward even higher resolution formats such as Ultra-HD or 4K video are just over the horizon. “With ever increasing video file sizes, you really pay for that extra level of detail in disk space,” Zeigler says. “In order to keep pace, we knew we were going to have to upgrade our storage environment to something that could provide us with massive scalability on short notice.”

Simultaneously, the team was trying to innovate on the front-office side of things by delivering desktops from a centralized infrastructure. “The idea was to limit the amount of time IT was spending diagnosing, repairing, and replacing desktop machines,” relates Jeff Hammond, IT Operations Manager for the team. “At the same time, we realized that if we could centralize desktop delivery, we could improve security, user experience, and uptime at the endpoint.”

## **Building a winning team**

With these needs top of mind, the Pirates approached All Lines Technology, a leading provider of technology solutions and services, and an HPE Platinum Partner organization. With a deep background in industry standard solutions for virtualization, servers, storage, networking, and backup, All Lines had the expertise the Pirates were seeking. But they had something else, too.

Located in nearby Warrendale, Pennsylvania, All Lines Technology offered proximity to the Pittsburgh team, but more important was their focus on delivering customer solutions that meet the unique needs of each client.

“We don’t just come in and try to sell products that might work in a given situation,” explains Justin Pippy, director of sales at All Lines. “Our goal is to understand our customer well enough so that we can help streamline and improve business for them.”

So the Pirates and All Lines set out to modernize the team’s storage and desktop environment while reducing network demands, improving backup and restore capabilities, and simplifying maintenance and support.

## **Scaling on their own terms**

The team at All Lines evaluated the Pirates’ increased storage capacity and flexibility needs for its player and scouting video analytics workflow, and recommended HPE 3PAR StoreServ 7400 to support continuous data growth and high levels of service.

“The scale-out architecture of 3PAR StoreServ was the right-sized solution for our growing video storage needs,” Zeigler explains. With the ability to quickly adjust and respond to changing demands, the Pirates can scale their storage simply by adding nodes to the cluster for seamless growth.

The solution allows the team to accommodate 40% more video content each season without the need of a forklift upgrade when growth occurs faster than anticipated. “For us, the 3PAR solution is the right thing for our organization, because we rely so heavily on HD video,” Zeigler relates. “Now we have a scalable storage environment that can grow with us, regardless of what video formats come next.”

## Case study

Pittsburgh Pirates

## Industry

Sports

### Customer at a glance

#### Hardware

- HPE 3PAR StoreServ Storage 7400
- HPE BladeSystem c7000 Enclosures
- HPE ProLiant BL460c Server Blades
- HPE StoreVirtual Storage VSA

#### Software

- HPE OneView

### Centralized and simplified

All Lines' experience in design and implementation was also a valuable asset to the Pirates' virtual desktop project. To deliver desktops to employees at its home PNC Park as well as workers at Pirate City—the team's Bradenton, Florida complex and Spring Training facility—HPE BladeSystem servers and enclosures were selected, along with 3PAR storage, to build the backbone of the virtual desktop infrastructure.

The combination of HPE BladeSystem and 3PAR storage technologies help the Pirates deliver centralized desktops that drive productivity with 96% faster configuration time, 50% fewer management tools, and a 35% reduction in total cost of ownership.

### Teamwork makes the dream work

Now that the Pirates are using their network for more complex traffic, they needed a way to better visualize network traffic and monitor resources. With the help of All Lines, the Pirates deployed HPE OneView—a converged management software toolset that delivers accelerated management of servers, network resources, and storage. "With HPE OneView, we've simplified the management of our BladeSystem infrastructure," Zeigler relates. "Now we can monitor and manage everything from a single pane of glass."

Together with All Lines Technology, the Pirates have built an IT infrastructure that helps the business of baseball as well as the game itself. "We really put our trust in All Lines to do the research and come back to us with the best solutions for our business, and they exceeded our expectations," concludes Zeigler. "Together with expertise from All Lines and innovative products from HPE, we're ready for whatever comes next."



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