

Case study

Workopolis

Canada's largest and most popular online career site chooses HP 3PAR StoreServ for mission-critical workloads



Industry

Career services

Objective

Deploy an enterprise grade solution for highly available, reliable storage at affordable cost

Approach

Choose HP 3PAR StoreServ 7400 for tiered storage, dynamic workload allocation at affordable cost

IT matters

- Doubled storage capacity
- Tiered storage (SSD, HDD) optimizes workloads
- Faster IOPS speeds analytics (example: reports in one hour vs. five hours)
- Intuitive interface simplifies management

Business matters

- Ensure mission-critical website reliability and performance
- Leverage Business Intelligence for product, service evolution
- Accommodate data volume growth without spiraling cost
- Save \$CAD60K annually through reduced co-location footprint



“Our entire revenue stream comes from our website; high performance is essential, but we also have to control costs. With HP 3PAR StoreServ, our company now has an affordable storage tiering solution with dynamic workload allocation.”

— Kevin Megarry, director of IT, Workopolis



Workopolis is Canada's number one online job site. A partnership between Toronto Star Newspapers Ltd. and Square Victoria Digital Properties Inc. for almost 15 years, Workopolis helps Canadians find jobs and connects employers with high-quality candidates. The company relies on Business Intelligence (BI) tools to continuously improve its customer service, leading to exponential growth in data volume and related costs. Workopolis aimed to lower storage costs while maintaining strong reliability. Because the company's entire business is web-based, its revenue and reputation rely on impeccable performance. Workopolis chose HP 3PAR StoreServ 7400 Storage for tiered storage, dynamic workload allocation, and reliable uptime at an affordable cost.

Workopolis maintains no brick-and-mortar storefronts, no physical customer locations; all its customer service is delivered via the web, which displays as many as 50,000 job opportunities at a time and counts millions of monthly visitors. Top recruiters search the Workopolis database 16,000 times a day. The company's storage infrastructure is essential not only to ensuring fast, reliable website performance, but also to supporting the BI analytics Workopolis uses to continuously evolve its products and services. With the company gathering, storing, and mining an ever-growing volume of data—from 20 TB to 40 TB over just three years—maintaining and expanding its existing storage infrastructure had grown prohibitively expensive. Workopolis aimed to upgrade its storage to keep up with increasing demands—and at the same time to contain costs.

“Our SAN is the most important piece of hardware for our business,” says Kevin Megarry, Workopolis director of IT. “If the SAN is not working, the costs of downtime would be substantial—both to our revenue streams and to our market reputation. We don't want to risk our business in any way. At the same time, we need to keep operational costs down. Those considerations—high performance at an affordable cost—led us to HP 3PAR StoreServ 7400.”

“HP, when it came to enterprise-class SANs, was always the best, and our experience over the last 10 years was always positive.”

—Kevin Megarry, director of IT, Workopolis

Workopolis runs a heterogeneous IT environment. At the front end is a collection of propriety customer-facing applications. Behind these lie Oracle, Microsoft® SQL, MongoDB, and MySQL databases; SAP® business intelligence solution; and Microsoft Exchange. The environment is virtualized, 90% on the VMware® platform but also with some AIX LPAR. “Due to our degree of virtualization and shared storage, it's safe to say that we rely heavily on the HP 3PAR StoreServ arrays,” Megarry says. “We have VMware, Windows®, Linux®, and AIX servers directly attached to the storage fabric.”

HP prevails in vendor evaluations

An HP storage customer for more than a decade, Workopolis moved to HP 3PAR StoreServ in 2011 and upgraded to HP 3PAR StoreServ 7400 three years later when the original lease expired. With each storage upgrade, the company evaluated multiple vendors and talked to other companies using both HP and non-HP solutions. “We evaluated for performance, power consumption, ease of management, capacity, cost, and also factored in our previous training and experience with HP 3PAR StoreServ,” Megarry says. “We were impressed with the intuitive management interface and reliability of our previous HP 3PAR StoreServ solution, so there was a sense of security in staying with a vendor we trust.” Workopolis also drew on the expertise of HP Partner Scalar Decisions Inc.

HP 3PAR StoreServ 7400 is designed to provide bulletproof Tier 1 storage at a midrange price—with six nines availability, data mobility, and scalability. Workopolis deployed three HP 3PAR StoreServ 7400 arrays, one in each of its data centers. In addition to the required HP 3PAR Operating System Software Suite, Workopolis chose HP 3PAR Data Optimization Software Suite; HP 3PAR Security Software Suite; HP 3PAR Reporting Software Suite; HP 3PAR Application Suite for VMware; and HP 3PAR VSS Provider for Microsoft Windows, to simplify purchasing. The company engaged HP 3PAR StoreServ Implementation and Startup Service to install the SAN and to power up the disks, but performed the data migrations on its own. “Another thing that attracted us to HP 3PAR StoreServ was its ease of use,” Megarry says. “We migrated to the new HP 3PAR StoreServ without any impact to the business and no downtime.”

Tiered storage, dynamic allocation, faster performance

With its migration to HP 3PAR StoreServ 7400, Workopolis doubled its storage capacity; reduced data center costs; optimized workloads; and increased the speed of its data analytics.

Customer at a glance

Application

Production systems for web-based career services company

Hardware

- 3PAR StoreServ 7400 Storage

Software

- HP 3PAR Operating System Software Suite
- HP 3PAR Data Optimization Software Suite
- HP 3PAR Security Software Suite
- HP 3PAR Reporting Software Suite
- HP 3PAR Application Suite for VMware
- HP 3PAR VSS Provider for Microsoft Windows

HP services

- HP 3PAR StoreServ Storage Implementation and Startup Service
- HP Financial Services

Using less power and space, the new arrays enabled Workopolis to reduce its co-location footprint by one cabinet and to retire an ancillary vendor product used in one of its data centers—consolidating everything onto HP 3PAR StoreServ and eliminating the extra maintenance contract. All this delivers more than CAD\$60,000 in annual savings. “With the new arrays, we have increased our available storage, reduced colocation costs, and mitigated some of the capacity limits we were running into,” Megarry says.

“Thanks to our high-performance HP 3PAR StoreServ storage solution, we can run reports faster and make decisions faster from our business intelligence.”

— Kevin Megarry, director of IT, Workopolis

Underlying the capacity increase was the introduction of tiered storage with dynamic workload allocation. Some of Workopolis’s website functions, such as job searches, are accessed frequently and require high input/output operations per second (IOPS). Other workloads require less. Before moving to HP 3PAR StoreServ, Workopolis had no way to tier storage according to workload. “All disk was expensive disk,” Megarry says. “We lacked the ability to dynamically assign disks based on tiers.” With HP 3PAR StoreServ, the performance and cost of the system can be optimized by correctly placing the data on different tiers. The most active data can be moved to the fastest, most expensive tier—Workopolis uses solid-state drives (SSDs) for high-performance workloads—while more-idle data is allocated to the slower, more economical hard disk drive (HDD) tier. What’s more, this allocation is flexible. “In addition to the benefit of having multiple tiers, we can

dynamically move workloads among tiers depending on such factors as time of day and customer application usage,” Megarry says.

Faster storage performance benefits business

Faster IOPs through tiered storage yields business advantages to Workopolis, where BI tools—mining data about customers and their behavior—are essential to evolving products and services. With the performance-based HP 3PAR StoreServ solution, reports that previously took up to five hours to run now take an hour. Scripts that had to run overnight can be run throughout the day, and Workopolis can run multiple workloads simultaneously. That translates into faster, more-adaptive business decision making. The company’s data-driven BI department gains rapid insight into customer behavior. Customers gain quick access to data, such as the number of people viewing their job postings.

“HP 3PAR StoreServ gives us affordable high performance storage for our virtualized environment.”

— Kevin Megarry, director of IT, Workopolis

“Data yields business intelligence, and our data volume continues to grow. It’s going to get bigger and bigger, and the bigger it gets the more performance we need,” Megarry says. “Thanks to our HP 3PAR StoreServ storage solution, we can run reports faster and make decisions sooner based on our business intelligence. We rely on HP 3PAR StoreServ for stability and enterprise features that allow us to maintain an up-to-date infrastructure to provide resources and services to the business without any disruption.”

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