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Azimuth Environmental Consulting, Inc.

AZIMUTH ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTING, INC.
Environmental Assessments & Approvals

SOLUTION SUMMARY

Growing by 30% year over year strained Azimuth Environmental Consulting, Inc.'s IT infrastructure to its limits. The company's growth stretched its peer-to-peer network, and tape back up system. With a new server featuring an Intel® Xeon™ processor, running Microsoft® Windows® Server 2003 and redundant back up systems to protect their data, Azimuth Environmental Consulting has the stability, security and protection of data it needs to continue growing and serving its clients.

Business Challenge

Whether its writing reports to assess the environmental impacts of a new golf course, or conducting groundwater studies to protect municipal water systems, Azimuth Environmental Consulting has grown dramatically since its foundation in 1995. But the incremental growth of the company stretched the company's IT system beyond the breaking point.

Mike Jones, President of Azimuth Environmental, founded the company and was responsible for managing the company's IT infrastructure. He started by building a peer-to-peer network by linking individual computers together to create a basic LAN environment for file sharing. Jones quickly realized the need for a back up system to protect the information that forms the foundation of the company.

As the company continued to grow, the back up process moved from one tape a week and a few hours to complete, to an arduous process involving three tapes and a two day process to make a complete back up. Needless to say, the data back ups became less frequent and missing files were a regular occurrence.

"Our biggest challenge was growth," says Jones. "We started with a small network of computers but we have big data requirements. We knew we needed a new system to reduce the risks of computer failure and data loss."

When an important hard drive failed, losing more than 50 gigabytes of work, Jones called Open Storage Solutions® for help.

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>
> **Mike Jones**
> President
> Azimuth Environmental
> Consulting Inc.

Solution

"The challenges faced by Azimuth Environmental were not dissimilar from large organizations across Canada. Their IT network had stretched beyond the breaking point and access to critical data became a challenge," says Gary Domski, Sales Manager for Open Storage Solutions, an IT service provider specializing in providing a

range of IT services to ensure businesses effectively protect their information throughout its lifecycle.

Open Storage Solutions moved Azimuth Environmental to an Intel Xeon processor family-based server, running Microsoft Windows Server 2003 to build a solid foundation for the company's growth. The server with Intel Xeon processors provides Azimuth Environmental with the performance, response times and power they need to complete massive environmental projects and reports. Highly scalable, the Intel Xeon processor-based server can continue to grow with Azimuth Environmental, providing greater stability and compatibility with a range of workstations.

Microsoft Windows Server 2003 provides Azimuth Environmental with a reliable, complete business server solution with messaging and collaboration, security-enhanced Internet access, protected data storage, reliable printing, the ability to run line-of-business applications, including CAD and GIS systems.

> **"Managing growth and coping with massive data requirements is mission critical for business success."**
>
> **Gary Domski**
> Sales Manager
> Open Storage Solutions

"Our role is to help move companies to more stable, available and expandable IT systems that can continue to grow as their business grows," says Domski. "Managing growth and coping with massive data requirements is mission critical for business success."

Open Storage Solutions was able to work with much of Azimuth's Environmental's existing hardware, minimizing the need for extensive and expensive upgrades. The Intel Xeon processor server provided the needed speed and centralized filing, while Microsoft Windows Server 2003 provided the rugged operating system to manage network resources, back ups and firewall in a seamless environment that is easy to maintain and back up.

Key Advantages:

INFORMATION CYCLE MANAGEMENT

"Information is the core to today's business, but not all information needs to be available at the same time. We work with companies to classify their information requirements and put the technologies in place to protect, archive and make information available when people need it," says John Ryan, Open Storage Solutions' Product Manager for Intel products.

By working through an Information Management program, Azimuth Environmental was better able to categorize and prioritize its data. The program then maps a back up regime for the information to ensure there are redundant copies of the information, and that the more critical information is available whenever a company needs it.

"All information is not created equal," says Ryan. "We help companies categorize and prioritize information so they store projects and data more efficiently. For many companies, information availability translates into business continuity. Without the data files, a company can't continue to operate."

SAVING FILES MEANS SAVING MONEY

"The reality is that our business is consulting. We sell ideas and the technical files are the basis for those ideas," says Jones, noting they are an organization that bills by the hour so losing work means losing more than the physical files, it means losing money. Losing a week's work is like losing seven percent of his annual revenue, which could make or break profitability for a year.

In the past, back ups were not always available when they were needed. The system designed by Open Storage Solution provides for three levels of back up – mirroring, RAID back ups and archiving to DVD.

The multiple levels of back up have already saved the company time and money. "On one project, we saved three to four days of a draftsman's time. Our backups were done and a file we lost was easily recovered," says Jones.

> **Microsoft Windows Server 2003 allows Mike Jones to focus on his core business. "…this gives our company more time to bring in more business and consult with clients. I have gained a day a week to run my business."**
>
> **Mike Jones**
> President
> Azimuth Environmental Consulting Inc.

SAVING TIME

Before moving to the server powered by Intel Xeon processors and running Microsoft Windows Server 2003, Azimuth Environmental's president was spending at least a day a week maintaining his network, troubleshooting PC issues and doing file back ups. Today, he spends only a few minutes.

Microsoft Windows Server 2003 allows Jones to focus on his core business without worry. "This gives our company more time to bring in more business and consult with clients. I have gained a day a week to run my business," he says.

Jones is not only saving time for himself but the overall network speed has also increased.

When working with graphically intense project files, the increased speed of file transfers has increased the efficiency of his staff. Gigabit speed file transfer capabilities allows the scientists to access, back up and work much quicker than in the past.

EASY INSTALLATION AND ADMINISTRATION WITH MICROSOFT

Working with Open Storage Solutions, the new network was installed and up and running by the time Azimuth Environmental's staff returned to work on Monday morning.

"The system was easy to install and easy to maintain," says Jones, noting they have been up and running for four months without incident.

GOING PAPERLESS

The new network is opening opportunities to construct client intranets and provide more direct access to files and materials. "We are moving to paperless reports, which is long overdue," he says, noting the network can now handle large file transfers electronically and more and more files are being shared this way.

Future Uses

As the company grows, the ability to access the office remotely will increase, says Jones. With plans to open new offices, and many staff on the road for client meetings, the ability to securely access files and reports over a Virtual Private Network will be staged in very soon. VPN access will increase mobility for Azimuth Environmental staff, while providing instant access to all the files required.

Solution provided by
Open Storage Solutions

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