

MTI shows savoir faire with total revamp of TraceOne storage strategy

French SaaS provider relies on MTI to deliver industry-leading performance



"The MTI team became an extension of TraceOne: this was a significant project requiring a complete overhaul of our storage infrastructure and I can honestly say that nobody was looking at the clock. We all worked together to bring this project to completion successfully and quickly. We have spent a couple of weekends working on the installation and I have never experienced this level of commitment from a channel partner. Both from the business and the personal points of view, I believe this project undoubtedly ticked all the right boxes."

Pierre Royon, architecture production and redesign administrator

Overview

Based in the heart of Paris and employing approximately 100 people, TraceOne delivers software solutions as a service using the fast-growing SaaS model. Chosen by the biggest and longest established names in the French food industry such as Carrefour and Auchan, TraceOne allows its customers to deploy highly collaborative work environments that encompass their own staff, partners and clients, be they foodstuffs manufacturers, marketing firms launching new products, advertising agencies designing new packaging, or any other. In order to maintain a strong relationship with its customers TraceOne understands that all its data is essential to the optimum running of the business. It therefore values its data in high regard whether it is a Word document, an image or a database. TraceOne stores its data on two SANs, or Storage Area Networks, the production SAN is located in Paris, and the backup SAN (which is also the location of two pre-production platforms) 400 kilometres (approximately 250 miles) away in Lyon.

The Challenge

TraceOne needed to ensure that its data was protected according to the level of criticality it represented for the company. Databases for example should continue to be spared I/O bottlenecks while other data that was less frequently accessed but which required great amounts of storage capacity, for instance large images that could easily demand tens of megabytes each, could be placed on lower-performance storage. This was the reasoning behind the choice of different types of hard disk drive technologies for example. In addition, the customer wanted a Recovery Point Objective, or RPO, of just 15 minutes between the Paris and the Lyons SANs as a key element of a new Disaster Recovery (DR) strategy. This would replicate the Paris-based SQL database to the Lyon site so efficiently that should the production SQL go down users could quickly and easily switch to the copy hosted on the SAN in Lyon. Such a demanding target required a very high-performance replication solution almost akin to Continuous Data Protection (or CDP).

The Solution

TraceOne decided that in order to have greater control over its storage strategy and infrastructure, it needed to deploy a complete storage environment, one that it could run and maintain independently. It also decided to focus on bandwidth and I/O performance because its databases are frequently accessed and would not work efficiently any other way. The TraceOne team was very clear on what it wanted to achieve and had a number of criteria it was working with, including reliability, cost and technical support quality. After speaking to a couple of existing MTI customers the TraceOne team was convinced this was the partner for them. After the briefing MTI decided that there was only one solution that would meet this strict list of requirements: EMC's Replication Manager deployed on the SQL server itself. This would allow replication between this server and the Paris-based EMC Clariion array, while EMC's SANcopy software would replicate data between this array and the one at the Lyon site.

Once work started on designing the new storage environment TraceOne made some changes which MTI successfully and smoothly included in the plan. Even when the team decided to change some mirroring parameters, MTI ensured the final design offered an even higher level of configuration and functionality than initially requested, at no extra cost.

In order to create the new storage infrastructure and given the nature of TraceOne's business, MTI deployed two Clariion-based SANs, replication software and a 60-tape library to increase the level of data protection.

After a few months however, due to unforeseen capacity requirement growth, TraceOne decided to upgrade Replication Manager and SANcopy to MirrorView, a single EMC software product that would provide increased scalability and therefore accommodate unlimited growth. In addition, MirrorView also allowed TraceOne to maintain the 15-minute RPO despite the increase in storage capacity, even with the two SANs being separated by a staggering 400 kilometres.

Throughout the process the customer enjoyed MTI's well-known level of industry-leading knowledge and professionalism, something that had not been found to the same extent in the other system integrators that had initially been considered for the tender.



The Benefits

Today TraceOne knows that it can independently run, maintain and grow its storage infrastructure, while enjoying the peace of mind that the MTI technical team is always just a phone call away. The 'Clos MTI,' an MTI France initiative similar to a user group, is a particularly welcome feature of the relationship. The learning curve has been short, easy and smooth, making this project a success on all fronts. But the benefits MTI has brought TraceOne do not end here: productivity has increased significantly, especially thanks to the fact that the team now manages its storage directly. Performance has also improved by moving from a 1GB to a 4GB cache and the backup window has been cut by 15%. In addition the difference the new solution has made to the data replication process between the two sites has been enormous; for example the 2h20 RTO (Recovery Time Objective) and the 1h30 RPO both shrunk to an incredible 30 minutes. And last but not least the system administration is now much easier and less time-consuming, in part thanks to the snapshot functionality of the EMC Clariion; in fact this system allows the IT administrators to obtain a production image and to simulate updates in just a few minutes. The gains in both performance and productivity are for all to see.

About MTI

MTI is a leading international provider of consulting services and comprehensive information infrastructure solutions for mid to large-size organisations. With more than 20 years' expertise as a storage technology innovator, MTI is uniquely qualified to assess, design, implement and support all data centre initiatives. Today MTI enjoys strategic partnerships with industry leaders including VMware, Cisco and EMC and offers the best data centre and cloud computing solutions and services available today. By employing a strategic, consultative approach, MTI provides customers with a single point of contact that eliminates complexities while delivering operational efficiencies and competitive advantages. More information is available at www.mti.com.

Case Study