Case study
Electronics

New cloud management platform for leading electronics distributor

Xtravirt's bespoke solution ensures consistency on time, every time and full visibility of existing infrastructure under a single solution

The Customer

This distributor of electronics, automation and control components, tools and consumables has operations across 32 countries, serving over 1 million customers globally.

What did the customer want to do?

The customer wanted a private cloud platform that would enable them to adopt a more agile approach to application delivery, and have various automation points for tooling and billing.

Previously, the customer's infrastructure had constraints which resulted in service provisioning taking too long, and being prone to human error due to numerous manual processes and risks to SLAs. They were also unable to accurately monitor or have transparent access to issues and alerts within their environment. The customer was therefore seeking to enhance their system performance, agility and transparency.

The new platform was required to be underpinned by a robust and automated infrastructure solution, and result in a significant reduction of time taken to deliver new projects, along with the ability to manage change and accelerate the provision of new services.

The final key requirement was full access and visibility into the way in which the infrastructure was performing, which could be achieved through a single pane of glass monitoring and management interface.

What did Xtravirt do to help?

Xtravirt were engaged to deliver a cloud management solution based on the VMware vRealize Suite with various automation points for tooling and billing purposes. The initial requirements were for a platform built using sophisticated technologies such as vRealize Automation (vRA), vRealize Operations (vROps), and vRealize Log Insight (vRLI).

At a glance

Challenge

- Improve performance and agility, and enable better decision making
- Reduce time taken to provision new servers
- Develop mechanism for accurately monitoring the environment
- Design and build a robust and automated infrastructure solution

Solution

- Design a cloud management platform based on VMware vRealize Suite
- Integration of vRA 7 for cloud automation
- Installation of vRLI to enable access to enhanced metrics
- Utilisation of vROps solution with Blue Medora Management Pack to enable monitoring, analysis and alerting within the cloud platform

Result

- A cloud platform capable of reducing build times by 70%
- The server deployment process was reduced by 67%; from 3 days to 24 hours
- True visibility from top to bottom of infrastructure and management stack
- Single pane of glass management, monitoring and reporting interface
- Full visibility of infrastructure under one solution

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Xtravirt designed and delivered a highly available vRA 7.1 distributed deployment that integrated the new vSphere 6.0 platform for much of the automation. Tight integration into the newly deployed Infoblox IPAM solution ensured a centralised IP address management solution for the entire estate, and proposed integration into ServiceNow as part of a later release.

The addition of vRLI into the overall solution now allows the customer to ingest log files from any device that supports SYSLOG and alert on recurring events within the logs. The native integration into vSphere, plus the additional content packs that allow vRA to display the logs from the cloud management platform, provides a comprehensive solution.

A vRealize Operations Management solution was designed and implemented for monitoring, analysis and alerting purposes within the cloud management platform. The addition of a Blue Medora Management pack enabled enhanced monitoring, analysis and alerting within the cloud platform. The solution included adapters, management packs, specific metrics, dashboards and reports. Blue Medora's solution extended vROps, and enabled the system administrators to gain comprehensive visibility and insights into the performance, capacity and health of their Cisco network, F5, Dell hardware and EMC VMAX workloads. These additional capabilities were used alongside several out-of-the-box dashboards within vROps that included health, performance and capacity.

To ensure a smooth transition for the customer, Xtravirt provided a staged handover, knowledge transfer and early life support to ensure that support teams were ready and enabled to run the solution.

What was the outcome of the engagement?

Designed and delivered by Xtravirt, the customer now has a cloud platform capable of reducing IaaS build times by 70%, ensuring a much higher level of consistency in the quality of provisioned instances. They also have a more dynamic service for IaaS requests and can request these in a much shorter time frame.

The automation solution deployed has also resulted in the customer achieving the consistent build and delivery of servers on time, every time. The process that was previously taking upto 3 days to complete with inconsistencies, now completes within 24 hours, upto 67% faster.

The integration of Log Insight to the solution enabled the customer to obtain enhanced metrics, resulting in true visibility from top to bottom of their infrastructure and cloud management stack.

The vROps and Blue Medora solutions provide a single pane of glass management, monitoring and reporting interface, with the ability to create custom dashboards resulting in increased visibility and ability to view the entire infrastructure.

Xtravirt's cloud management solution delivered the customer's requirements in full, significantly reducing cost overhead and risk, while increasing performance, agility and service delivery times.