Swish

Data Center Modernization

Swish helped the Wisconsin Army National Guard (WIARNG) transition from a management-intensive data center environment to a unified, optimized, scalable, and automated architecture by leveraging VMWare virtualization, NetApp data fabric, Catalogic data protection and Swish services.

Client

Wisconsin Army National Guard
Defense Industry

Solution

> **Swish Services**
> **OEM certified professionals**

> **VMWare vSphere**
> **NetApp Data Fabric**

> **Catalogic Data Protection**

Background

The WIARNG engaged Swish in September. Swish had equipment on-site by October and began work before the holidays. By spring, the WIARNG was fully standalone and optimized. Swish maintains a relationship with the WIARNG and continues to support its mission.

Challenge

The Wisconsin Army National Guard's data infrastructure had essentially scaled out of control.

The WIARNG had numerous storage systems, resulting in a fractured architecture. Critical applications were not protected during backup, and there were many file servers and disparate application server/storage silos to maintain. These problems were caused by an ever-growing mission and providing the organization with more disk storage each time requirements grew. The result was an amalgamation of many generic products that couldn't scale efficiently, were costly to maintain, and required divergent knowledge sets.

IT had become too labor-intensive and complex for the WIARNG staff. The organization needed to go from a fractured, management-intensive environment to a unified, optimized, scalable, and automated architecture.

Getting Started

Swish began with a dialogue identifying the customer's most pressing concerns. Every engagement starts with a conversation, and desire to truly understand the business objectives and constraints. Swish's initial consultations with a potential client involve live white-boarding and analysis sessions. This process helps visualize the end-to-end architecture, challenges, and mission objectives.

The WIARNG has smart and highly motivated IT experts, but they struggled with the available resources, fighting a battle against a data infrastructure which was out of control. The organization needed a unified storage architecture and processes – including consolidation into one enterprise data fabric.

Solution

Based on the WIARNG's defined objectives, Swish provided the organization with the statewide IT resources it needed for command and control, including a continuity of operations (COOP) plan for the organization's backup site. Now, the WIARNG's IT systems are uniform and automated.

The WIARNG manages about 30 TB of production data, including applications such as VMWare, SQL databases and Exchange, plus flat files and user data. As mentioned, the organization also uses a replicated system housed at a distant location from its headquarters to provide COOP should the organization encounter a site-level IT issue or need disaster recovery.

During the deployment, Swish's specialists helped the WIARNG become experts in adopting and operating the new solution. The organization's management challenges dwindled. Swish credits the success of this project, and others like it, to our ability to truly become a member of a customer's team.

Some companies need to bring in partners to implement solutions. But Swish's engineers are experts in all of the technologies it sells, and the company can build on, and integrate with, existing infrastructures from other manufacturers as well. There are no "handoffs," and there is a single point of contact for customers through the whole project. Since the initial deployment of the WIARNG's project with Swish, the organization has continued to grow.

The WIARNG has realized significant cost savings because the new architecture is reliable and manageable, requiring less time just making sure things work. They leverage one set of management procedures in which they become proficient. When funding cuts happen, it's important that the organization's IT infrastructure can be easily maintained when available manpower is stretched to its limits.

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"We came to a game plan together and then achieved our goal as we envisioned."

Chief Warrant Officer Steven Smith
Chief Warrant Officer – WI ARNG