



Ontario Nurses' Association Enhances Quality of Work-Life for Members

Zycom Technology Streamlines IT with Nutanix Managed Service Solution

BUSINESS BENEFITS

Nurses are on the front lines of Ontario's healthcare system, and the quality of their working conditions is directly related to the quality of patient care. The Ontario Nurses' Association (ONA) represents more than 65,000 registered nurses and healthcare professionals, as well as 18,000 nursing student affiliates, across the province. This proactive union is committed to improving the economic welfare and quality of work-life for members. To help staff focus on providing the best possible service to its members, ONA partnered with Zycom Technology to move to its Nutanix Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS) solution.

“Migrating to Nutanix has enabled us to dedicate more resources to other projects, so we can get them going quicker and get them completed faster. We don't have to worry about monitoring as many physical elements. Instead, we can focus on providing service and support to our staff and members.”

- Dave Laxdal, Manager, Information Technology, Ontario Nurses' Association

CHALLENGES

Since 1973, ONA has worked collectively with members to ensure that its members can provide the quality care that patients expect and deserve. When the network that supports all its operations began to show its age, the Union needed new options to balance performance and cost. “We would either have to

INDUSTRY

Professional Services

BENEFITS

- Two-to-three times faster application performance saves employees time, freeing them to focus on serving members better
- 70 percent increased performance streamlines backup and maintenance
- One-click upgrades keep software and security current.

SOLUTION

Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform
Nutanix AHV
Nutanix Prism

Applications

- Microsoft Office Suite
- Microsoft SQL custom databases
- Email and collaboration

migrate our VMware solution to new infrastructure and storage, or explore other available technologies,” said Laxdal.

ONA represents its members and provides legal representation in the event of workplace issues and relies on its infrastructure to help manage the negotiation of nearly 600 agreements, almost on an annual basis. Its new solution would need to be able to dependably handle a high volume of sensitive data. “Security is important, and performance is absolutely important. And because we retain a lot of historical information within the system, performance can sometimes become an issue because of the amount of data that we hold,” said Laxdal. “We realized that with Nutanix, we could more easily enable some speed and performance increases, save on storage costs, and streamline our operations in a hosted co-location. So we decided to go with Nutanix instead of sticking with VMware.”

SOLUTION

ONA worked closely with Zycom Technology, a leading IT solutions provider, to migrate its applications and workloads to a Nutanix hyperconverged solution. “We moved to an Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS) solution delivered by Zycom,” said Laxdal. “The service lets us maintain control over spinning up and configuring our own virtual machines (VMs). Zycom handles the maintenance of our Nutanix host.”

The Nutanix infrastructure supports the full range of workloads and services that ONA needs to support its members, including email and collaboration, office productivity applications, as well as its custom-built Microsoft SQL database. “We have a variety of in-house applications that we have built over the last decade and a half,” said Aashish Wadhawan, Senior IT Network System Administrator. “Most of these support our internal staff, a user base of about 250 people. Some examples include case management systems and a membership management system, running on the SQL server.”

Nutanix Prism enables IT to understand the state of its infrastructure, keep it continually up to date, and use its resources more efficiently. One-click upgrades help ensure that ONA’s software and security is always optimized and up to date. “Using the Prism interface, we can see what needs to be upgraded,” said Laxdal. “We have a real-time view of what updates and upgrades we need, and we can interface with Zycom on them. I find it easier compared to VMware to actually find out what systems are using the majority of resources, and which ones are over-provisioned or under-provisioned.”

RESULTS

Laxdal and his IT team experienced an immediate improvement in performance after updating the ONA infrastructure to Nutanix, to streamline the work its employees do every day. Many of its applications are data-intensive, including large Microsoft Word and PDF attachments, making latency and performance especially critical. “We have probably seen an increase of two to three times in terms of application performance compared to what we had before,” said Laxdal. “In my world we are hearing fewer complaints about speed issues,” added Kris Bhoutika, Manager of Applications Development. “Our applications are optimized, and since the database is performing faster, we are not hearing complaints. It cuts down on our support calls.”

When ONA requirements change, it’s easy for IT to allocate additional resources to support new services or applications. “If we want to test out a new product, do a proof of concept, or just want to rapidly deploy something, either for end users or testing, it’s really quick for us to do it,” said Laxdal.

Moving storage onto Nutanix has also accelerated the speed and response time of the organization's back-end maintenance routines, as well as backups. In some cases, performance of these processes has improved by 70 percent.

NEXT STEPS

As ONA continues to get more comfortable using and managing its Nutanix solution, the organization is considering adding new capabilities to further simplify network and policy management. Nutanix Flow can support advanced networking and security services to enable the organization to gain visibility and granular control. "We are looking into using Flow to better manage east-west traffic within our data center," said Bhoutika. For ONA, the future of supporting healthcare delivery looks bright for years to come.



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