



LESSARD GROUP

Optimizes Storage Capacity and Implements Cost-Saving, Robust File Virtualization by Leveraging High-Availability Configuration of Attune Systems Maestro File Manager

CUSTOMER'S OBJECTIVE:

- Increased storage efficiency
- Detailed analysis of existing storage and data
- Preventing costly downtime

SOLUTION:

- Attune Systems Maestro File Manager™ configured for high-availability

BENEFITS:

- Ability to use existing storage infrastructure
- Windows compatibility
- Native support for CIFS, Microsoft Cluster Server, and Active Directory
- Gradual, low-risk implementation
- Tier 1 storage redundancy
- Easy and quick installation and training

LESSARD'S DATA EXPLOSION:

- 2003: 70 users
2007: 170 users
- 2002: 250 GB
2007: Nearly 4 TB



Zak Khalil, MIS manager at Lessard Group Inc. in Vienna, Va., had a major IT challenge. Lessard, a leading architectural and urban design firm on the East Coast, was growing exponentially. The data volume — much of it graphics and drawings — was booming and he needed to find a solution to manage mission-critical data and control escalating storage costs.

Five years ago, Lessard was running on one NAS server, using roughly 60% of its 250 GB capacity. Today, the company generates some 4 TB of Tier 1 and working data. At this rate, data was doubling in volume every nine months and outgrowing the DAS servers' capacity.

"My goal was to upgrade and not replace our storage" he said. "We wanted a way to build on and optimize our existing infrastructure." — Zak Khalil, MIS Manager

Khalil began looking for solutions. He needed to expand capacity while better managing and understanding the data. "We needed data management more than sheer capacity," he said. "Every floor plan we generate references 10 to 20 other files that may not change for years, but need to be accessible nonetheless. We needed a way to analyze, and then better manage our resources and our data."

Khalil evaluated a number of replacement storage solutions and found them too expensive or too cumbersome to install. Most vendors would lock him into one system and keep him from reusing his existing hardware. "My goal was to upgrade and not replace our storage" he said. "We wanted a way to build on and optimize our existing infrastructure."

In the course of Khalil's research, he learned about the Maestro File Manager from Attune Systems, based in Santa Clara, Calif. Their file virtualization appliance provided integrated server discovery and reporting, real-time policy management, non-disruptive data migration, and custom namespace to preserve the client's view/path to their data. The Maestro File Manager also allowed him to use his existing servers and kept him from the inflexible situation of a vendor lock-in.

Khalil liked the fact that the software would run on its own appliance rather than on his servers. There was no pushing out network agents — no sapping precious processing power, no threat of costly downtime, and no disruption to end-user activities. Maestro sat one layer over the file servers without disrupting his infrastructure. He also values Maestro's ability to realize cost savings by offering the analysis and capabilities needed to plan and then implement more efficient use of existing servers.





WINDOWS COMPATIBILITY SEALS THE DEAL

"The fact that Attune's Maestro is built on a Windows platform and naturally leverages key technologies from Microsoft such as CIFS, SMB, Microsoft Cluster Server, and Active Directory made it fully compatible with our environment, and that sealed the deal," Khalil said.

Khalil initially purchased the Maestro in December of 2006 and then purchased the high-availability solution as a repeat customer. The initial implementation came in February. Khalil said that with Maestro, the learning curve was quite short; his administrators were comfortable within two hours. The initial discovery and analysis, performed by Attune systems, proved to be very comprehensive. Installation and training were complete in less than two days, and Khalil was able to move data around and see benefits immediately.



GRADUAL DEPLOYMENT AND MIRRORING

Any time a new technology is deployed, the goal is to make the transition with as little risk and disruption as possible. Khalil is currently taking advantage of Maestro's gradual deployment capabilities to test and implement at the best possible pace for his environment. "We're using Maestro to migrate volumes over gradually," he said. "We switch to extended mode one volume at a time."

Khalil plans to set up mirroring of the Tier-1 storage across two HP Storage Servers and reclaim storage space on older servers for Tier-2. This configuration's redundancy and failover capabilities will help us maintain uninterrupted access to the company's data.

REDUCING DOWNTIME

Khalil expects Maestro to help eliminate file server downtime – estimated around \$15,000 an hour – and ensure that users keep their data access regardless of what happens to the file server. In the past, OS problems have forced servers to shut down two or three times per year. "That's a lot of money, plus we had virtually no maintenance window for file servers. Now with Maestro, we no longer need that window".

Khalil's Maestro purchase is also an investment in Lessard's future.

"With Maestro we will be able to leverage our excess, stranded capacity for the next three years," he said. "Without Maestro, we would have undertaken a very costly, risky and time consuming fork-lift upgrade"

Zak Khalil is thrilled to not only automate all of their tasks, but leverage full-scale file virtualization for his existing resources – and Maestro delivers on its promise.