

SUCCESS STORY

SmartyHost

CHALLENGE

Rapid growth and high customer demand require a reliable, scalable, and highly available IT infrastructure to support an expanding Web hosting company

SOLUTION

Deploy Dell™ PowerEdge 1855 blade servers with Intel® Xeon® processors running the Linux® operating system; consolidate storage on a Dell/EMC storage area network (SAN) using Dell Services for training and support

BENEFIT

Solution easily scales to meet skyrocketing demand and need for provisioning new services; Dell/EMC SAN impressive backup, redundancy, and disaster-recovery capabilities help ensure high availability; Dell platform provides economies of scale that match the company's mission to provide affordable Web services; Dell Services helps ensure staff productivity and system availability

Get Smart

Dell servers and storage help to enable SmartyHost to grow wisely while expanding its offerings of affordable Web hosting services

Known for delivering incredible value, Australian Web hosting company SmartyHost has attracted more than 25,000 new customers since it was founded in 1999. In addition to great value, brilliant service is something that the Melbourne-based company takes very seriously—so seriously, in fact, that the company among is one of only a few accredited domain name registrars in Australia, which means it met the strict guidelines for quality and service required by the .au domain administration organization.

Critical to the booming success at SmartyHost is the reliability of a robust IT infrastructure. The vast majority of SmartyHost customers are businesses that depend on the high availability of the company's systems to conduct operations. Finding a stable platform that allows for growth is vital in the highly competitive Web-hosting arena. "Not only do we compete with very large corporations in Australia, we also compete with overseas companies," explains Anoosh Manzoori, SmartyHost founder and managing director. "We have to be able to manage our growth while staying sensitive to price. For that we need a scalable and modular architecture that we can easily deploy step by step as we grow."



“Choosing a modular Dell architecture has given us economics of scale that mean we can go out and sell a good product at good prices.”

— **Anoosh Manzoori**
 Founder and managing director
 SmartyHost

SmartyHost makes an intelligent choice in Dell

In order to achieve the affordable scalability crucial to his company’s success, Manzoori invited a number of vendors to propose an IT architecture that could grow to meet the intense demands at SmartyHost. After evaluating the products and services of several leading vendors, he concluded that Dell would allow SmartyHost to architect a highly reliable and scalable system that would enable SmartyHost to grow effortlessly.

Dell consultants also demonstrated a fluent understanding of the SmartyHost business model. “We compared vendors by price, ease of scalability, and understanding of our business model,” Manzoori explains. “We spent about nine months working with other vendors discussing our needs and business, and less than four months with Dell. In that short time, Dell specialists were able to offer excellent feedback and advice. We found the whole process was much more streamlined and in sync with the way we do business than with many other vendors.”

Dell blade servers promote data center consolidation

Because the company adds a new server almost every week to keep up with growth, Manzoori chose an architecture that could easily scale as well as reduce the considerable space and power requirements. As a result, the IT environment at SmartyHost environment is now composed of approximately 150 Dell PowerEdge 1855 blade servers with Intel Xeon processors running the Linux operating system.

Chief among the appealing features of the blade servers is the ability to consolidate the IT infrastructure. “The telecommunications industry in Australia isn’t as competitive as in the United States, and we tend to pay a lot for rack space,” Manzoori explains. “We are planning on continuing to grow, and we didn’t want to have to make a significant upfront investment in hardware. Since you only need to provision a number of blades ahead of time without planning six or twelve months down the track, you can be a little closer to home in terms of how you order your new products

and more modular and nimble in the way that you scale.”

Dell/EMC SAN improves disaster recovery and delivers storage consolidation

To help improve redundancy and ensure effective disaster recovery, Manzoori also chose a Dell/EMC CX500 SAN. The CX500 boasts cached performance of up to 760 MB/s and easily scales from 5 to 120 disk drives, so handling the two terabytes of data currently on the SmartyHost system is a real no-brainer. “The SAN enabled us to consolidate the storage for all our customers onto a single unit that is fully scalable,” Manzoori says. “Plus we gained enormous flexibility in terms of redundancy, and that allows us to enter more markets, particularly in the corporate sector where we can provide high-end dedicated disaster recovery services.”

Systems management software keeps SmartyHost in the know

In addition to its hardware infrastructure, SmartyHost uses Dell OpenManage™ server management software with the Altiris® Server Management Suite™ to help simplify administrative chores and reduce cost and complexity. “Altiris has been a fantastic product for us. As we deploy blade servers, our server management software enables us to do drag and drop installations,” Manzoori explains. “This really cuts down the time for installation and setup. We are growing very quickly, and we have a very small window of opportunity to deploy new hardware, so our ability to bring a server into production quickly is very important.”

Since the SmartyHost data center is housed in a major exchange about 20 kilometers away from the main office, SmartyHost developers use Dell Remote Access Controller for Modular Chassis (DRAC/MC) to assist with remote server management. DRAC/MC provides users with the necessary tools and functionality to monitor, troubleshoot, and repair servers as far away as on the other side of the world. “Remote access to our racks is critical,” Manzoori says. “We don’t want to have to put on our jogging shoes and run down to the data center every time we need to provision a server.”

Dell provides a comprehensive range of services to help ensure success

To help ensure that all of the company’s engineers keep up-to-date on system knowledge, SmartyHost used Dell training services for the SAN implementation and the Altiris software deployment. “This training gave our highly qualified engineers an opportunity to learn the tricks and tips that might not be obvious when coming up to speed with new technology,” Manzoori says. “It’s helped them be more productive and increase system efficiency.”

Also, SmartyHost selected Dell Gold Enterprise Services to help ensure system availability. "We've only had to use our Gold Enterprise Support once, when a USB port on one of the blades had a problem. The part was replaced and the server was up and running in less than three hours," Manzoori says. "It was a very smooth process from start to finish."

Dell proves a wise investment

In the final analysis, being able to keep up with customer demand during a period of explosive growth at SmartyHost has been easy thanks to Dell. "We have been able to go out into the marketplace and reassure our customers that we have a world-class solution through Dell," Manzoori says.

HOW IT WORKS

HARDWARE

- Dell™ PowerEdge™ 1855 blade servers with Intel® Xeon® processors
- Dell PowerApp.BIG-IP server
- Dell/EMC CX500 storage area network storage array

SOFTWARE

- Dell OpenManage™ server management software
- Linux® operating system
- F5 Networks BIG-IP® Controller software
- Altiris® Server Management Suite™

SERVICES

- Dell Training Services
- Dell Gold Enterprise Support

"That has been very difficult for many of our competitors to match, yet we're able to offer this fantastic solution at our existing price point."

What's more, thanks to the flexibility permitted by its Dell IT architecture, SmartyHost is getting ready to launch a new brand that will give the company an opportunity to move up the vertical ladder. "Choosing a modular Dell architecture has given us economies of scale that mean we can go out and sell a good product at a good price," Manzoori says. "Plus, our new business brand is based on a range of dedicated servers and disaster recovery solutions using the SAN. In terms of both price development and new market opportunities, we're already seeing a great return on our Dell investment."

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