

## INDUSTRY

Housing

## BUSINESS CHALLENGES

Consolidate physical servers to make substantial power and cooling required savings and provide a flexible infrastructure to meet both the current needs and future requirements.

## BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

NetApp FAS 2050  
Active/Active System (ASIS De-Dupe, Snapshots and FlexVol thin-provisioning)  
VMware 3x VI Enterprise & VMware VC management Server  
CISCO 3750 Switches  
Installation, Training and Support

## BUSINESS BENEFITS

Reduced power and cooling required.  
'Sweated' existing server assets provides instantly better return on investment (ROI).  
Increased disaster recovery and business continuity  
Incredibly flexible infrastructure to meet both the current needs and future requirements.

# National Housing Federation gets new home for its Data

## The Customer

The National Housing Federation [www.housing.org.uk](http://www.housing.org.uk) is a trade association representing 1,200 independent, not-for-profit housing associations in England, is the voice of affordable housing and its members currently provide two million affordable homes for five million people.

The mission of the Federation is to support and promote the work of housing associations and campaign for better housing and neighbourhoods. To this end their five strategic aims are:

- To create the conditions for their members to flourish;
- To ensure housing associations have a strong and positive reputation;
- To lead the housing and neighbourhoods policy agenda nationally and locally;
- To provide excellent, highly valued organisational and business support for all their customers and their tenants, and
- To ensure the National Housing Federation is an exemplary organisation and a great place to work.

To achieve these aims, the Federation is funded through membership fees and commercial services such as conferences, training and publications. This enables the Federation to promote the values, successes and the vital future role of its members by representing and negotiating the strategic interests of a diverse but united sector in providing the affordable

homes required to meet the nation's social housing needs.

## The Challenge

The Federation made the conscious decision to address the "Green" agenda through the introduction of a programme of virtualisation along with the implementation of a Storage Area Network (SAN). The aims of the project were to:  
consolidate the number of physical servers through virtualisation;

- Make substantial power savings through consolidation;
- Reduce the amount of cooling required through consolidation;
- Improve the ROI through the improved usage of current assets;
- Improve the disaster recovery and business continuity of critical services;
- Introduce SAN technology to support both virtual and physical servers, and
- Provide a flexible infrastructure to meet both the current needs and future requirements of the Federation.

NHF invited competitive bids to obtain the best solution to meet the needs of the Federation and Alpha was chosen because the solution offered closely met the Federation's needs and requirements.





## The Solution

Alpha designed a solution taking into consideration the requirements for the implementation and integration with the existing and future systems and is designed to meet the following objectives:

- Provide a cost effective solution
- Provide a solution which could be effectively deployed and managed
- Provide a resilient, scalable solution with an emphasis on consolidation, virtualisation and DR/Business Continuity.

The proposed solution was based around a the NetApp FAS2050 unified storage architecture and VMware ESX virtualisation infrastructure to produce a flexible platform with low total cost of ownership (TCO) to support current and future business requirements of the federation.

## Infrastructure

To identify which servers were good candidates for consolidation and to validate what the final virtual server infrastructure would look like, Alpha performed a capacity planning exercise which examined utilisation metrics on the existing physical server infrastructure. This process also identified 3 existing servers capable of hosting the VMware ESX removing the need to purchase any new server hardware.

"Everything is working extremely well, the whole project went smoothly and the support we received was excellent. Alphas system engineers showed a lot of patience in helping our team with the whole process of setting up the ESX and SAN services which have paid dividends and resulted in a successful conclusion to this project."

**Rob Green** Head of ICT  
National Housing Federation

The NetApp unified storage was configured as an iSCSI based SAN with dual disk failure protection (RAID-DP) with hot spare drives and connected to a pair of Cisco switches. The FAS2050 can also support FC SAN connectivity if required in the future.

## Benefits for the Federation

After completing the project the federation have;

- Consolidated 11 physical servers onto 3 servers
- Anticipated that substantial power savings will be achieved through consolidation; By reducing the number of physical servers and also reduced amounts of cooling required
- 'Sweated' existing server assets provides instantly better return on investment ( ROI)
- Increased disaster recovery and business continuity of critical services; and provides the framework for increasing this further
- A single iSCSI SAN which supports both the virtual and physical servers
- Incredibly flexible infrastructure with the NetApp unified storage architecture and VMware ESX virtualisation to meet both the current needs and future requirements of the Federation with simple upgrade paths and no hidden surprises.

## About Alpha

Alpha is a leading supplier of data management solutions. Established in 1981, Alpha provides its UK wide customer base with the peace of mind that their data is safe.

Maximising return on your investment from data management implementations takes experience, commitment and a passion for excellence. Alpha makes it simple and affordable for customers to implement enterprise class data management solutions all through a single, experienced provider.



**Novell.**



**data domain**



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