

MYRON CORPORATION

Deploys V-locity® Acceleration Software, Sees Dramatic Boost of File Server Performance



September through January is Myron's busiest time of year. When files weren't loading, IT was hearing about it: "Help! The art browser is stuck!" and "No new images since 9:53 AM!" were complaints from the art department. With hours adding up to days of lost productivity, all eyes were on IT to solve performance problems and get files moving again.

CHALLENGES

- Increase in workload and I/O demand during fourth quarter busy season
- Large art department accessing, modifying, and transferring terabytes of data on art file servers
- Hours of lost productivity due to art files processing slowly or loading with errors

V-LOCITY® BENEFITS

- Significantly improved file server response time, files processing in a quarter of the time, no load errors
- Complaints and support time around data performance eliminated
- Dramatic reduction in amount of I/O traffic enabled more VMs to be added to SAN, while extending the life of infrastructure
- No additional investment in SSDs or other storage hardware to increase performance

THE CUSTOMER

Established in 1949, Myron Corporation started as one of the early mail order companies in North America and has grown to a global marketer of personalized business gifts serving 16 countries in Europe, Scandinavia, Australia, and the Middle East. From Myron's full-service website, companies order from a range of items to personalize, helping them build brand and promote their own businesses.

THE CHALLENGE

Personalized products mean big art files constantly being accessed from file servers and transferred across the network. If those files aren't moving fast enough, or they're loading with errors, the art department can't get work done and projects won't be completed on time. "It's pretty simple—we're talking about files not moving fast enough and art not processing properly," says Giuseppe DeBari, Network Manager, whose team supports users on the WAN, LAN, and globally. "Our users access an HTML interface that shows status of jobs. Green is good, red means jobs aren't completing properly. And that's when the calls start to come in, especially on batch jobs."

In September, the beginning of Myron's busiest season, the complaints were coming at full force. "We're a fourth-quarter business, so we were losing hours of productivity during our busiest time," DeBari explains, "So when I got an email about V-locity software and application performance, it was perfect timing."

Myron's art department was accustomed to the status quo: alerting IT that files weren't coming in, or that the art browser was showing red, red, and more red. That is, until Giuseppe's team began an evaluation of V-locity® for virtual environments on a production file server.

“With V-locity we’ve seen a 157% decrease in I/O to the SAN, but for us it’s really about performance. Users are happy, files are processing properly, and work is getting done in a quarter of the time.”

GIUSEPPE DEBARI
NETWORK MANAGER

ENVIRONMENT

- VMware ESX and ESXi
- SAN Technology: EMC hybrid SAN with SSDs and SAS attached to fibre
- Terabytes of data on art file servers

V-LOCITY FEATURES

IntelliWrite® I/O optimization technology automatically prevents split I/Os from being generated when a file is typically broken into pieces before write.

IntelliMemory™ intelligent caching technology caches active data from read requests using available server memory.

Benefit Analyzer embedded benchmark provides before/after performance comparisons, enabling IT to measure workloads and performance in a real-world environment.

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THE SOLUTION

“We started the evaluation in September and put it into our production environment,” says Giuseppe. “We saw immediate performance improvement and all the complaints stopped.” During the testing, he spoke with the Art Manager who confirmed data was moving a lot faster, and the team was much happier. “When the evaluation ended and V-locity was disabled, the complaints started again,” he says. “But I wanted to be sure the improvement wasn’t a fluke, or an effect of something other than V-locity.” So the evaluation was extended and V-locity was re-enabled in production. Again the complaints stopped, and again the Art Manager confirmed the dramatic improvement in performance. “Processing time for some of the larger files went from five minutes down to one. And there were no issues of files loading with errors. That’s when we knew we needed to buy,” Giuseppe explains.

Prior to V-locity, Myron’s environment was already optimized for topnotch performance with new VMware ESX hosts connected to a new EMC hybrid SAN, with SSDs and SAS connected to fibre. Even with advanced storage and networking technologies already in place, speed and performance were still an issue due to the heavy workloads. Installed on Windows VMs at the operating system layer, V-locity nondisruptively optimizes I/O at the source—reducing the I/O requirement for any given file. By preventing a surplus of I/O from getting funneled into servers, network, and storage, the entire infrastructure (compute, network, and storage) derives benefit because only productive I/O is generated by the VM.

With IntelliWrite technology, V-locity automatically prevents split I/Os from being generated, allowing more data to be packaged on every write. With IntelliMemory, V-locity caches active data in available server memory to further reduce I/O demand on storage devices. As a certified VMware-ready solution, V-locity automatically and transparently improves application throughput and latency on heavy workloads running on x86 platforms.

THE RESULTS

Giuseppe’s team has been running V-locity in its virtual environment since the evaluation, and plans to migrate SQL to one of the hosts running V-locity. “We’ve seen an average 157% reduction in I/O traffic, which enables us to attach more VMs to the SAN and get longer life out of it.”

But the biggest benefit has been performance. “It’s really about moving data faster and processing art faster—that’s the lifeblood of our business,” he says. “Now months later after deployment, V-locity put an end to performance calls. Users are happy, and work is getting done in a quarter of the time.”

Browsing old support emails, all dating back before V-locity, he continues, “Here’s an email where someone says ‘Nothing has moved since 4:26, it’s now 6:10,’ so there’s a two-hour window where nothing was getting done.” He concludes, “We haven’t gotten an email like this since. That’s why V-locity is now a must-have for all our data-intensive applications and servers. We won’t run without it.”

V-locity software has enabled Myron’s IT team to continually provide the best service levels to its users, manage heavy workload during its busiest season, add more VMs to the SAN without adding new hardware, and drive greater value from their existing infrastructure.

CASE STUDY