

Tennis Australia scores big with IBM XIV storage

Wins with a strong band of reliability, simplicity, and scalability

Overview

The need

With the pressure and exposure of major international tournaments, Tennis Australia had a compelling need for reliable, easy-to-manage storage that could scale quickly—while saving time and money over the long term.

The solution

Tennis Australia scored big by implementing the IBM® XIV® Storage System, which dramatically reduced downtime, cut costs, and simplified storage management

The benefit

- Reliable, easy-to-scale storage
 - Simple to learn, use, and maintain
 - Ability to support data-intensive files, such as an massive historic video library
-

Tennis Australia, the governing body of tennis within Australia, holds a preeminent position in world tennis. Host to prestigious tournaments, including the Australian Open, Davis Cup, Fed Cup, and Tennis Pro Circuit, the organization also supports state, territory, and local affiliates as part of its daily activities.

Once a year, the combined workforce of Tennis Australia and its state based associations scales its 300-strong workforce by 1500 percent for the Australia Open, which attracts half a million attendees, including fans, players and their entourages, and thousands of journalists—and millions of TV viewers worldwide. Its storage needs peak at that time, as well.

Demanding sport, demanding requirements

About a year and a half ago, Adam Beames, Systems Administrator at Tennis Australia, was concerned that their incumbent storage would run out of space during a key tournament, causing crippling downtime. “We couldn’t risk taking a whole night to carve up a LUN,” explained Beames. “We needed extreme agility to accommodate our peaks.” IT stability is so important the organization freezes modifications to their storage environment two months before a major competition. “The last thing we need is for something to go wrong when we make a change or to lose data on a restore,” explained Beames. “The world is literally watching us.”

Tennis Australia sought a change. Their new storage system needed to be easy to use, reduce downtime, scale quickly, and take up less space—and position them for the future. Explained Andrew Player, IT Infrastructure Manager at Tennis Australia: “Volume and reliability requirements alone propelled us into a new league of storage—we needed powerful, dependable, enterprise-level storage to position Tennis Australia for the long term. Rapid and easy scaling was a ‘must’ because our storage needs increase with every event, but never decrease.”



“IBM XIV is storage made easy—it’s shocking how simple it was to set up” Said Beames. “Creating and growing volumes, once a time-consuming procedure involving extensive planning and more than a day to execute is now, a 10-second, blink-of-the-eye command. This is a huge improvement in service to users.”

Clean sweep from the opening serve

A single presentation on the XIV system, and the team was convinced. “No other storage solution works like it; IBM XIV is ingenious technology applied in a completely new and innovative way. It was clearly the direction for our long-term IT infrastructure,” explained Beames.

Tennis Australia purchased IBM XIV just three months before their most significant revenue-generating event, the Australian Open, and completed migration on time: In the single month before their standard two-month lockdown. “I attended a two-day IBM training class and started implementation a few hours later,” recounted Beames. Using the XIV data migration feature, the team seamlessly transferred 30 TB of data overnight—with only 10 minutes’ downtime to turn the system off and on. Commented Beames, “The XIV ran so fast, some of the other systems couldn’t keep up; we actually had to tell it to slow down.”

Player gives the XIV system high scores for being “self-contained” and highly available: “It gets rolled into the server room, powered up, and is ready to use. If a disk fails, you don’t have to automatically shut down. The system rebuilds and keeps on going.” He added, “In fact, XIV has taught us the best practice for how storage should be done—we actually went back and reimplemented our server setup the XIV way.”

Tennis Australia now uses XIV for all its disk storage needs, including as an interface to its scoring system and as the back end to the organization’s heavily used website. All servers are connected to the XIV system, and all other storage systems have been decommissioned.

Performance powerhouse

“XIV defies logic when it comes to adding storage,” said Beames. “With other systems, when you add disks, you wind up with less performance; it blew us away that with XIV’s sophisticated architecture, when you add storage, you actually gain performance.”

Fully confident in XIV reliability, Tennis Australia transitioned all website storage for its 2010 Brisbane International Tennis Tournament, amid 600 gigabytes in user traffic, during the week of the event. “We could never have done that before,” said Beames.

IBM Solution Components

Hardware

- IBM® BladeCenter® HS22
- IBM XIV® Storage System
- IBM System x® 3850 M2

Software

- IBM DB2® Version 7
-

“No other storage solution works like it; IBM XIV is ingenious technology applied in a completely new and innovative way!”

—Adam Beames, Systems Administrator,
Tennis Australia

IT Environment

Operating Systems

- Microsoft® Windows® Server 2003 through 2008 R2
- Linux®
- Open BSD

Databases

- Microsoft SQL Server 2005 and 2008

Applications

- Microsoft Exchange 2007
- Microsoft SharePoint 2007
- Microsoft Dynamics CRM

Virtualization

- VMware ESX 4.0

Utilities and Middleware

- Xen App 6
 - Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007
-

Powerful coaching tools

Tennis Australia sees XIV simplicity and automation as an enormous enabler, and its point-and-click interface a winner. Explained Beames, “We were having trouble with the complexity of block-level SAN and sought ease of use. We are a lean IT department; now others on our team who aren’t storage experts can jump in when I’m not around. But it’s not just that XIV has a fantastic GUI—it’s the functionality that goes with it.” Beames uses XIV’s monitoring utility on a daily basis to identify performance issues and ensure even processing, and downloads XIV “x-rays” to analyze the inner workings of each module, noting: “I must admit, I’ve never needed to intervene.” The team seeks to expand their use of thin provisioning—“great to have,” noted Beames—and snapshots for testing and backup. The XIV command line option serves their large batch processing and complex scripting needs.

Tight grip on VMware

Virtualized on VMware for the past four years, with 99 virtual machines running, Tennis Australia enjoys the XIV system’s tight interlock with VMware to expedite processing. “The round-robin way in which XIV does load balancing with VMware accelerates reporting to the direct host—without additional cables—and results in faster throughput,” observed Beames.

Growing fans and season lineup

With their data center centrally located at Melbourne’s Rod Laver Arena, Tennis Australia finds itself showcasing the XIV system to others. “Everyone wants to see the XIV they’ve heard so much about,” acknowledged Beames. As a result, other Australian sports and leisure entities have acquired XIV storage, including Melbourne and Olympic Parks Trust, which owns and manages Melbourne’s huge sports campus, and is using IBM XIV at its production and mirrored facilities, and Melbourne Park Function Centre, a premier exhibition and event facility, which has migrated all its data to XIV storage.

With its newfound solid enterprise storage footing, Tennis Australia has key projects lined up, namely formalizing its remote disaster recovery plan, including upgrading from tape-based backup to disk based, and transitioning their vast video repository of tournaments and training sessions to IBM XIV so it can be accessed by the public from their website. Beames no longer worries about storage: “I have better things to do, like strategic planning, implementing new systems, and catching the sports action—live.”

For more information

Contact your IBM sales representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit us at: ibm.com/systems/storage/disk/xiv

For more information about Tennis Australia visit: tennis.com.au

Additionally, financing solutions from IBM Global Financing can enable effective cash management, protection from technology obsolescence, improved total cost of ownership and return on investment. Also, our Global Asset Recovery Services help address environmental concerns with new, more energy-efficient solutions. For more information on IBM Global Financing, visit: ibm.com/financing



© Copyright IBM Corporation 2010

IBM Systems and Technology Group
Route 100
Somers, New York 10589
U.S.A.

Produced in the United States of America
August 2010
All Rights Reserved

IBM, the IBM logo, ibm.com and XIV are trademarks or registered trademarks of International Business Machines Corporation in the United States, other countries, or both. If these and other IBM trademarked terms are marked on their first occurrence in this information with a trademark symbol (® or ™), these symbols indicate U.S. registered or common law trademarks owned by IBM at the time this information was published. Such trademarks may also be registered or common law trademarks in other countries. A current list of IBM trademarks is available on the web at "Copyright and trademark information" at ibm.com/legal/copytrade.shtml

Linux is a registered trademark of Linus Torvalds in the United States, other countries, or both.

Microsoft and Windows are trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States, other countries, or both.

Other company, product and service names may be trademarks or service marks of others.

References in this publication to IBM products, programs or services do not imply that IBM intends to make these available in all countries in which IBM operates. Offerings are subject to change, extension or withdrawal without notice.

The information in this document is provided "as is" without any warranty, either expressed or implied.



Please Recycle