

Harnessing high-performance flash architecture boosts transactional workloads at international brokerage firm



Client Profile

Founded in 1914, R.J. O'Brien & Associates (RJO) is the largest independent futures brokerage firm in the US, serving institutional, commercial and individual clients globally, as well as a network of 400 introducing brokers. The firm offers state-of-the-art electronic trading and 24-hour trade execution on every major futures exchange worldwide.

Today in 2020, RJO operates over 100,000 clients in Europe, Asia and the Americas, with customer assets totaling more than \$4.5 billion across their operating entities.

Client Testimonial

“ Our primary business is heavily transactional. This led us to seek out a reliable, highly available storage solution that could perform above our complex workload requirements. Managing a combination of differing platforms, at varying stages of their lifecycles and all with different interfaces, had become a major burden on our IT teams.

Nimble was the clear winner across all of our requirement categories. Integration has been almost as easy as plugging in a new switch. Our business has seen a drastic reduction in the time it would have taken to turn projects around. To say we are happy would be an understatement. ”

JULIAN MARQUES
SENIOR SYSTEMS ENGINEER, RJOL

Business Need

RJO Limited's storage estate comprised a mix of old and new technologies built up over time and via acquisition. This presented RJOL with manageability, performance and usability issues, making it difficult to deliver some of their technical projects without a major redesign. RJOL's users additionally required training on numerous, often-complicated systems which created a significant burden on their internal technical resources.

The ever-increasing costs associated with licensing, support and upgrades, coupled with an increase in data volume and virtualised platforms, contributed to RJOL's growing challenge. They realised that they needed a new a cutting-edge solution with very low technical management requirements that could cover all their storage needs both now and in the future. They also required a support structure that would help with the design and eventual migration of data thus removing the support burden from their internal teams.

Solution

Autodata provided RJOL with a high level of pre-sales consultation detailing the best solutions in the storage market. Autodata facilitated an initial meeting with Nimble Storage (a Hewlett Packard Enterprise company) and after a successful introduction we arranged a Proof of Concept. Running the POC alongside NetApp and Tintri helped to evaluate each solution's capabilities against RJOL's specific benchmarks for performance and scalability.

After running the initial POCs for a couple of weeks, NetApp and Nimble were successful in moving to the next stage. This involved stress-testing each platform for a four-week period, introducing real RJOL workloads to each competing platform. Autodata provided both performance and evaluation consultation, assisting RJOL in performing their own tests and helping them to interpret the results they were seeing.

RJOL's reliance on highly virtualised systems and large data stores led them to choose Nimble as the platform that could be expanded easily in both storage and performance terms. RJOL decided to purchase two Nimble CS5000 arrays, placed in London and Frankfurt and installed in a high-availability pair.

Result

RJOL were impressed with Nimble's performance, simplicity and support right from the start. They were looking for something easy to set up and configure that would not burden their internal staff with managing the arrays. Nimble is pre-configured and optimised for applications out-of-the-box. The initial configuration and set-up can be completed in less than two hours and routine storage management operations can be completed in minutes.

Thanks to Nimble's standardised Snapshots and predictive InfoSight VMVision tool, RJOL were able to quickly and easily deploy an entire new virtual environment and rescue a business-critical legacy file server. Nimble Storage InfoSight allows for full performance monitoring and trend analysis of virtualised VMware vSphere environments plus provides capacity planning and demand management with proactive support.

RJOL cite the key benefits to their business as being: massively reduced latency across the company; the ability to plan ahead with predictive analysis through InfoSight; reduced burden on their technical team thanks to easy-to-use storage management; and a quick, reliable storage system on which they can now expand their virtualised infrastructure.