



## COROID CASE STUDY

### Palmer's College deploys Coraid no-single-point-of-failure architecture for VMware vSphere

#### CHALLENGE

With a limited budget deploy a high performance, low-cost, and easy-to-use shared storage solution for a VMware vSphere virtualization environment while protecting data from hardware failures.

#### SOLUTION

Coraid EtherDrive® SRX3200  
Coraid EtherDrive VSX2500  
No-Single-Point-of-Failure  
Architecture

#### BENEFITS

By turning to Coraid to build an Ethernet SAN Palmer's College found a solution that out-performed Fibre Channel alternatives for a fraction of the cost. It meant that the College was also able to protect its data and operations with a no-single-point-of-failure architecture, avoiding downtime for emails and student records.

#### CUSTOMER OVERVIEW

Palmer's College, a 300 year old educational establishment in Thurrock, Essex, deployed Coraid Ethernet SAN storage as part of a large datacenter VMware virtualization project.

With 250 staff and 2,200 students, Palmer's College relies on data including emails, file systems, databases and images, most of it subject to data retention regulations (emails and student records must be kept for five years and old students' work for three years) all of which contribute to a significant growth in storage requirements and management challenges.

#### BUSINESS CHALLENGE

In 2010 the college was offered an interest-free government loan towards its IT infrastructure so it decided to take the opportunity to virtualize its datacenter to save power and cooling as it had maxed out the available capacity. Such a move called for new, fast and reliable storage that offered large capacity and scalability and allowed the College to continue to provide a 24/7 service to students.

"Any state academic institution is under the same pressures: to provide best-in-class service with limited funds, and for the IT department this can be a serious challenge with more and more establishments offering media-based studies that put significant strain on storage capacity and administration," commented Marcos Burnett, EMEA Sales Director, at Coraid. "On top of the above, Palmer's College has a very large graphics department so the team needed a solution that would scale easily and cost-effectively. We were able to meet all these requirements and offer the peace of mind that comes with knowing that you can grow your data cost-effectively."

#### TECHNICAL CHALLENGE

The college was handling 6 TB of data and running 36 servers to support its emails, filing systems, databases and large graphics requirements.

Network and systems developer Dan Byne and his team of five had a clear brief: the new storage would need to be affordable, easy to use, reliable, and offer high performance. In addition, the new systems would need to be in place within a year to fit in with the terms of the government loan.

#### SOLUTION

After considering a number of options including EMC Clariions and Celerras, Palmer's College selected two Coraid EtherDrive SRX3200 Ethernet SAN storage arrays and two EtherDrive VSX storage virtualization appliances to create a

"no-single-point-of-failure" system, all with 10Gb Ethernet for maximum performance.

Each VMware vSphere server contained two HBAs connected to redundant Ethernet switches which were connected in turn to the VSX and SRX appliances. This architecture ensures that the failure of any one component, from HBA to switch to storage appliance, will not result in a disruption in service. Plus, the data was mirrored between the two SRX appliances, ensuring data would be protected.

### SOLUTION

After deploying the Coraid storage systems, IT staff at Palmer's College has been impressed with the ease of use, performance and reliability of the Ethernet SAN solution.

"Our Coraid systems have curbed our needs for additional IT staff; the storage infrastructure is much easier and quicker to manage now. What took a working week before only takes a day now," said Byne. "The Ethernet appliances are very fast and the performance/cost and capacity/cost ratios are fantastic. Like most colleges, our IT budgets are very tight so we need to make every penny work as hard as possible; this is why we are considering purchasing additional Coraid systems."

Palmer's College now has a no-single-point-of-failure virtual infrastructure with a significantly lower total cost of ownership compared to competitive Fibre Channel storage and did not sacrifice data protection or performance.

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