IHG®

IHG Becomes One of the First Companies to Move Its Mission-Critical Elasticsearch Deployment to Hyperconverged Infrastructure

Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Software with AHV and Prism Provide Higher Performance, Simplify Management, and Enable Easy Scalability for Rapidly Growing Analytics Platform

CHALLENGE

IHG is using the Elasticsearch distributed analytics engine to search, analyze, and store all of its application and infrastructure logs and data. Over 3TB of data is collected each day from IHG's datacenter facilities on the East and West coast of the United States, numerous remote offices, and several public cloud instances.

"We use the Elasticsearch analytics engine to obtain operational visibility into our critical applications and measure the revenue impact of incidents to help us meet our system availability SLAs," explained Brian Malia, systems and storage manager at IHG. "The information is

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> – Brian Malia, Systems and Storage Manager, InterContinental Hotels Group

COMPANY

InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) is the second largest hotel company in the world with 5,431 active properties in over 100 countries and an additional 1,776 hotels in the pipeline.

INDUSTRY

Hospitality

BUSINESS NEED

Existing infrastructure was not able to provide the necessary scalability or visibility into IHG's application data, inhibiting its Elasticsearch analytics platform and operational dashboards.

SOLUTION

Nutanix Enterprise Cloud
- Acropolis software, including AHV virtualization
- Prism Central management infrastructure

Elasticsearch search and analytics engine

BENEFITS

- Provided the ability to quickly and easily scale Elasticsearch deployment.
- Shortened the time to complete firmware upgrades from >1 week to a few hours
- Gained better visibility into applications and systems, leading to improved uptime
- Eliminated the need to hire subject matter experts for infrastructure management
- Reduced CapEx and OpEx

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being used to improve the stability of our client-facing operations, including our company's website, mobile site, and customer rewards program."

Unfortunately, IHG's existing infrastructure couldn't scale fast enough to support the rapidly growing Elasticsearch environment. "With all of the layers of complexity and different components in our previous IT environment, each firmware upgrade took over a week," Malia said. "The lengthy maintenance outage windows were starting to impact our end users' ability to access and utilize the valuable Elasticsearch data. Since the costs, time, and effort required for scaling had all reached an unacceptable level, we decided to look for a better solution for the upcoming infrastructure upgrade."

SOLUTION
Choosing Acropolis and AHV Software
"We wanted to find a simpler and more cost-effective architecture for our Elasticsearch environment," explained Malia. "After comparing the ease of use, performance, and management features of several hyperconverged solutions, we chose Nutanix Enterprise Cloud with AHV virtualization for our Elasticsearch deployment. Nutanix's high performance, real-time visibility into the environment, ease-of-use, and price gave it the edge over the alternatives. Another reason we chose Nutanix was the option of utilizing AHV, the hypervisor that's included with Nutanix's Acropolis software. AHV has enabled us to lower our TCO, by eliminating our expensive hypervisor licensing fees."

RESULTS
Accessing Elasticsearch Data in Real-Time
"By using Nutanix Enterprise Cloud software as the platform for our Elasticsearch analytics engine, we are now able to collect a larger amount of data and analyze it in real-time," said Malia. "With better and faster analytics, we can be more proactive keeping our environment stable. We are one of the first companies to run the Elasticsearch engine on hyperconverged infrastructure, let alone the use of Acropolis with AHV. We worked with the Nutanix support team to optimize the environment, and develop a set of best practices for the implementation which we have shared with Nutanix in a Tech Note. The high performance and management simplicity of the Acropolis OS and hypervisor have been a good fit for our analytics platform."

Management Simplicity
"Nutanix is far less complex from a management perspective than the other solutions we tested," Malia shared. "Before we moved to Nutanix, we had to coordinate all infrastructure changes with other IT groups in our company, and then upgrade every separate component one by one. Due to the need to involve multiple teams, infrastructure upgrades took over a week, compared to just a few hours with Nutanix."

Gaining Better Visibility with Prism Central
IHG is using Nutanix Prism Central to manage its Enterprise Cloud environment. "With Prism Central, we can provision all of our storage and fully manage VMs from just one console," noted Malia. "The centralized management features are a definite plus with the Nutanix platform, as we can aggregate events, alerts, and performance monitoring for all of our sites into a single operations view. Plus, we no longer need to hire multiple IT subject matter experts, since anyone on our team can learn to manage Nutanix software in just a few hours."

Speeding Time to Resolution

"By using the Nutanix platform for our Elasticsearch deployment, we are now able to collect revenue application data in real-time, enabling us to gauge the financial impact of any outage, speed time to resolution, and ultimately improve the customer experience," Malia said.

NEXT STEPS

After seeing how well the Acropolis software and AHV are working for its Elasticsearch deployment, IHG's IT team is now moving other workloads over to Nutanix, including its business-critical call center application. "We are also deploying Nutanix at some of our remote and branch offices. Since those offices don't require a lot of infrastructure, it is a simple process to ship a Nutanix system out to those sites and have everything up and running in a few days. Moving our Elasticsearch deployment to Nutanix Acropolis and AHV has been an excellent decision for our company. We consider Nutanix to be a true partner to our organization—not just another technology provider," concluded Malia.

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