

A Successful Data Center Migration and Refresh



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The newly-hired IT Director at the California Community Foundation knew the organization's aging network's reliance on a third-party hosting company had become too expensive and too limited - and needed a refresh. He partnered with Datalink Networks to design and engineer a new, hybrid cloud infrastructure that will scale with CCF for years to come.

The California Community Foundation (CCF) has served Los Angeles County for 100 years, stewarding nearly 1,600 funds and \$1.7 billion in assets to address some of the core concerns of the community. CCF sponsors a range of competitive grants to other local non-profits in arts, education, health care, and transition-aged youth and housing and economic development throughout Los Angeles County.

Challenges

Director of Information Technology Aspet Amirkharian arrived at CCF with a mandate to refresh the organization's aging infrastructure, much of which had been outsourced for many years to a third-party hosting vendor. He surmised that an infrastructure upgrade to a hybrid cloud environment could enable CCF to take advantage of multiple best-of-breed technologies, such as including Office 365 and other hybrid cloud services.

Case Study at a Glance:

Industry

Non-Profit

Objective

Bring network functions on premises to update and take advantage of efficiencies from deploying new, secure, cloud-based technologies.

IT matters

- Migrated data center functions and apps from third-party cloud vendor to hybrid infrastructure, with several functions now hosted on premises.
- Migrated hosting center functions and applications to cloud providers and direct on-site control.
- Organization-wide adoption of Office 365, giving staff 24/7 access to the up-to-date Microsoft email and Office Applications.
- Upgrade of all desktops with new Image for Windows 10.
- Email encryption, email filtering capability.
- Upgraded to shared SSD Storage to provide redundancy of servers and data in house.
- Enterprise-wide data backup stored on-premise and in the cloud for redundancy.
- Dual firewalls and switches for a highly available data center.

“The catalyst was the directive I had from management when they hired me, so they were already ready to move in that direction,” says Amirkhanian.

But first, Amirkhanian needed to get a baseline picture of the areas that required the most attention. Datalink Networks performed an audit and security assessment of CCF’s existing network.

That assessment revealed a need to architect a Microsoft Directory infrastructure that would allow CCF to properly secure its internal network and automate its maintenance of servers and client machines.

At the time, Amirkhanian had one help desk worker assisting him with responsibilities for 85 client devices. Datalink Networks engineering provided support for all of the data center equipment, servers, storage network and wireless.

The Solution

CCF now has virtual servers set up across dual physical hosts providing a redundant environment running on Microsoft Server 2012 R2. Security is enhanced with dual Next Generation Firewalls and email encryption and filtering.

“We now have the infrastructure in place to block us against certain attacks and also to be highly available at all times. Reporting is important, visibility is important, alerting is important, and overall security is a big part of our job nowadays so we want to make sure we keep our network secure, our data secure, and our users educated,” says Amirkhanian.

Storage Architecture

Datalink Networks also installed new shared storage with intelligent management software and SSD drives. These deliver improved functionality, performance, efficiency, reliability, and ease-of-use for CCF.

Hybrid Cloud Backup

CCF’s old tape back-up system was antiquated and inefficient. Datalink Networks presented Amirkhanian with a number of solution options, and he settled on hybrid cloud backup from Datto. Now they’re prepared for any kind of disaster, be it an earthquake, ransomware, or simple human error.

“I think the high availability and being able to spin up a server in the cloud from our data was a big selling point,” Amirkhanian says.

Managed Services

CCF was also able to augment their IT staff by outsourcing certain functions to Datalink Network’s managed services.

“Datalink worked with us on our IT staffing requirements by offering remote services under a managed support agreement that helps us manage our network and infrastructure, and they continue to support us on IT staffing. Datalink and CCF have a great partnership that allows us to work together to manage our network and offer great services to our employees and customers.”



Aspet Amirkhanian
Director of Information Technology
California Community Foundation

“Datalink Networks provided a solution where we could integrate our local infrastructure with the cloud environment and provide the services that we need.”

Conclusion

The organization continues to refine its systems and is currently working with Datalink Networks to make the move to Office 365 for their VOIP communications.

“I think it’s important to partner with a managed service provider who can help you throughout your journey,” says Amirkhanian. “There are many pieces to IT infrastructure, You cannot find one person that knows everything, so it’s important to work with somebody who can bring you resources on various different areas, whether it’s security, storage, infrastructure, firewalls, or cloud services. We partnered with Datalink Networks and have not looked back.”

Solution Summary:

- **Design**
- **Architecture**
- **Data center**
- **Networking: wired & wireless**
- **Email migration services**
- **Network security**
- **Managed service agreement**

Products:

- **Huawei** - firewall, storage, servers
- **Edgewave** - email encryption & filtering
- **Microsoft** - Office 365 (cloud services, Skype for Business VOIP)
- **Datto** - hybrid cloud backup
- **Autotask** - endpoint monitoring
- **Aruba Networks**- wireless networking
- **HPE** - switches /networking





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