

Compaq gives Burda a competitive edge



„A consolidated server landscape with Compaq AlphaServer™ GS160 systems and a StorageWorks™ SAN solution by Compaq gives us the agility we need to respond quickly and cost-effectively to changing customer needs. We can now provide computing power and storage capacity on demand.“

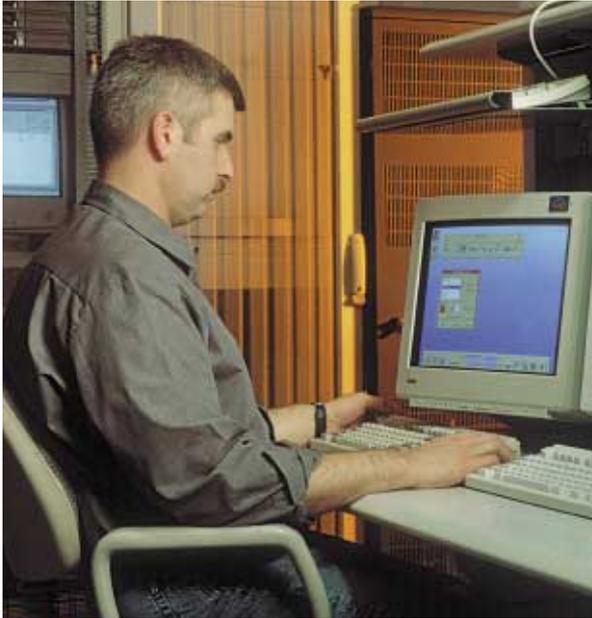
Wolfgang Wassmer, client/server service manager, Burda Systems GmbH

Business results

- > Improved manageability through server consolidation
- > Competitive edge thanks to increased availability and fault tolerance
- > Protection of investment with seamless scalability
- > Increased productivity due to greater performance and throughput

„Today we are at the forefront of technological innovation with the AlphaServer GS160. Our experience with Compaq has always been excellent. We couldn't be in better hands.“

Wolfgang Wassmer, client/server service manager, Burda Systems GmbH



Competition is stiff in the German market for magazines and specialist publications. The number of publications has more than doubled in the last ten years alone. Positioned as one of the key newspaper and magazine publishers in Germany, the Hubert Burda Media Group sees this growth as an opportunity rather than a threat. Responsible for many of the leading household publications in Germany (including the magazines Focus and Freundin), Burda continues to succeed in new markets. With over 220 magazines distributed in Germany and abroad, Burda, along with its subsidiaries and partners, reaches some 29 million readers worldwide.

To ensure the instant availability of up-to-the-minute content, Burda needs a highly available, robust IT system. Burda Systems GmbH, the IT service provider of the Hubert Burda Media Group, runs a data center in Offenburg, Germany, to meet the Group's mission-critical IT needs.

Keeping pace with change

More than 1,500 users connect to the SAP solutions at the data center in Offenburg. Designed as a central mySAP.com® instance, the

servers host the mySAP™ Media industry solution (Burda Advertising Center), SAP R/3® components including SAP Financials (SAP FI), SAP Controlling (SAP CO), SAP Materials Management (SAP MM) and SAP Human Resources (SAP HR), and a proprietary Media Sales solution. In the past, these solutions ran on eight different Compaq AlphaServer servers, each with their own storage systems.

After almost five years in service, the existing infrastructure had reached its limits. Particularly given the increasing complexity of new applications in recent years and the rapid growth in data volumes, throughput and storage bottlenecks were inevitable. At the same time, customers were demanding higher levels of availability and fault tolerance.

To meet these and future challenges, Burda Systems decided to redesign its server and storage environment. It was looking in particular for more scalability, flexibility and availability. In February 2001, Burda Systems consolidated its server landscape on Compaq AlphaServer GS160 systems and replaced the storage systems with a single centralized storage-area network (SAN) solution from Compaq Computer Corporation.



Designing in 24x7 uptime

Burda Systems wanted to offer its customers a class of service that virtually eliminates downtime. To ensure this level of availability in the future, Burda Systems had to carefully assess sizing requirements and ensure sufficient scalability to support future short-term increases in data and throughput needs.

Also crucial to uninterrupted business operations was the issue of an enterprise-wide backup/restore strategy and the expansion of existing storage capacity.

Reducing TCO

Equally important in the decision to redesign the existing landscape was the need to cut costs. In the words of Wassmer: „We were faced with the challenge of maximizing system availability, while reining in costs. The last thing we wanted to do was increase complexity or the effort involved in managing the system by installing more servers and storage systems. Server consolidation was a strategic vehicle for us in this context.“

Manageability through consolidation

Having investigated the solutions offered by various hardware manufacturers at the SAP Solution Centers in Walldorf, the project team decided in favor of Compaq. „Essentially, the decision for Compaq and AlphaServer technology was made six years ago“, reports Wassmer. „No other vendor could match the AlphaServer for performance and throughput and we needed a supercomputer to power our central mySAP.com instance. Now Compaq has again positioned us at the forefront of technical innovation with the AlphaServer GS160. We could not envisage another hardware partner and our experience with Compaq has always been excellent. We couldn't be in better hands.“

Burda Systems GmbH thus replaced its eight independent servers with two Compaq AlphaServer GS160s running the Tru64™ UNIX 5.1 operating system. The servers are clustered using Compaq AlphaServer TruCluster™ software. The clusters ensure maximum availability by enabling an application to failover to the other „live“ cluster in the event of a fault.

This allows Burda Systems to deliver the service levels and business continuance it has agreed with its customers. „Thanks to the AlphaServer Tru64 platform with TruCluster technology, we can now offer 24x7 availability for mission-critical SAP applications“, adds Wassmer.

The AlphaServer GS160 servers are identically configured, each with 16 CPUs and 16 GB RAM. SAP's software solution is designed as a three-tier landscape with the productive system running on one server and the development and test systems running on the other. „This set-up is ideal for our developers“, comments Wassmer. „They can run tests in a realistic mySAP.com environment with data that is replicated monthly instead of restricting themselves to data subsets.“

What makes it work:

Hardware:

- > 2 6-way Compaq AlphaServer™ GS160 servers
- > 1 AlphaServer™ DS20
- > 3 StorageWorks™ Enterprise Modular Array systems (EMA12000)
- > 1 Compaq Enterprise Storage Library (ESL9326)
- > Compaq Fibre Channel Array Controllers (HSG80)

Software:

- > Compaq Tru64™ UNIX operating system (Version 5.1)
- > Compaq TruCluster™ software (Version 1.6)
- > SAP R/3®
- > mySAP™ Media industry solution

Storage on demand

Server consolidation presented the perfect opportunity to reorganize storage at Burda Systems. The project team was looking in particular for a cost-effective way to efficiently manage the ever-rising data flow. In the past, storage disks (16 TB in total) were assigned to specific servers. Because storage capacity could not be reassigned or easily expanded, sizing and accurate forecasts of future growth were an essential, but difficult challenge.

Burda Systems therefore decided to switch to a Compaq SAN. The SAN is built around StorageWorks™ solutions by

Compaq. At the heart of the SAN are three StorageWorks Enterprise Modular Array systems (EMA12000). The servers are connected to the EMA12000 systems via redundant Compaq HSG80 Fibre Channel Array Controllers. The SAN features three 16-port switches for dynamic assignment of storage. The flexible assignment of virtual storage units enables efficient deployment of resources and automation of storage management processes, which, in turn, has significantly reduced administration costs. It also allows Burda Systems to scale storage on demand, keeping pace with short-term changes in storage needs.

Having previously used server-connected DLT tape drives to back up its Oracle databases, Burda Systems also decided to replace its backup solution to enable a greater level of performance and reliability.

Burda Systems now uses VERITAS NetBackup with a Compaq Enterprise Storage Library ESL9326 (326 DLT tapes). The integrated tape library now automatically executes many operations previously performed manually. The new solution is considerably more transparent, reliable and efficient.

Satisfied customers

The new hardware platform has greatly enhanced both availability and performance, particularly with batch jobs. With one particular application, runtime has been reduced from 20 to six hours. Faster response times have also contributed to the general enthusiasm among users. „With our new server and storage landscape, we are ideally equipped to meet and exceed customer expectations“, comments Wassmer.

Employees at Burda Systems also benefit from the new consolidated landscape. There has not been a single hitch since the system went live.

For more information visit compaq.com/partners/sap

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