

Xylos' storage solution is also a demo system



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– IT Manager Sebastian Volders, Xylos

"Bringing people and ICT together." Belgian IT company Xylos could not have thought up a more appropriate motto for itself. It is a well-known fact that this provider of high-quality, total ICT solutions focuses on customer-friendliness in system integration and training. Now, Xylos is pulling out all the stops to make its motto a reality.

With this aim in mind, Xylos is making its new HP StorageWorks Enterprise Virtual Array 3000 (EVA3000) available to its customers, so they can try out the capabilities of the high-end storage system. Customers can take advantage of their first live, hands-on experience without having to make the investment. Xylos customers



include high-performance small-midsize enterprises; larger companies; and organizations such as Atlas Copco, Delhaize, the Ministry for the Flemish Community, Minit, and Promedia.

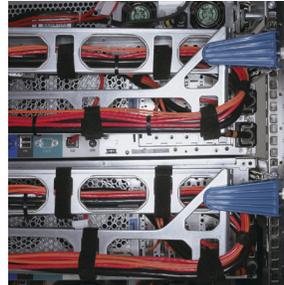
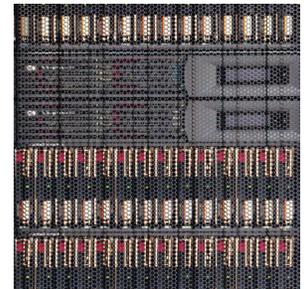
Recommending solutions that live up to promises

Xylos will have been operating in the ICT marketplace for 20 years by the end of 2004. During this time, Xylos has carved out a strong reputation and built up a workforce of some 110 employees.

"Financially speaking, we are in a reasonably strong position," says Xylos' Managing Director Ludo Wijckmans. "We have turned a profit every year for the past 19 years while achieving steady growth. Equally important over this period is all of the experience we have gained working on international infrastructure projects. We have not had to face some of the problems that our customers currently have to deal with. In fact, as a medium-sized business ourselves, we face the same challenges as the companies in our target market.

"Let me explain," he continues. "Some time ago, we noticed that the ICT buying behavior of companies had changed fundamentally. The notion of return on investment (ROI) has become increasingly important in this highly competitive market. Customers are constantly asking





themselves what a particular investment will yield for them, in comparison with the cost. Before they make any decision to purchase, they want to find out all about the capabilities they will gain by implementing this or that form of technology. Our aim is to support them with advice and help in making these decisions. But we can only do that if we are convinced that the solutions we aim to recommend to our customers will actually live up to their promises in terms of return." Now that Xylos is the first HP partner in Belgium to buy an HP StorageWorks EVA3000, the same principle still applies.

Acquiring the EVA3000 storage solution runs parallel with the phased implementation of an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system from Navision. This system enables the company to consolidate customer relationship management (CRM), accounting, and management of various information systems, while increasing cost efficiency. It will also significantly expand functionalities, boost user-friendliness, and support the company's future growth.

Over the past five years, Xylos' database has doubled, due in part to providing a number of customers with managed services. "This meant we had to bring in a new storage system so that we could optimize our business activities and further improve the service we provide our customers," explains IT Manager Sebastian Volders.

After an in-depth study of the market, Xylos opted for HP to handle this operation. "Actually, it was logic itself," says Volders. "We had already been working closely with one another for years (initially with Compaq and subsequently with the merged HP) and as a result, we had built up a thorough knowledge of what this particular IT provider had to offer. Purchasing the HP StorageWorks Enterprise Virtual Array 3000 enabled us to expand our expertise and then make it available to our customers. The storage solutions that HP offered us (specifically the HP StorageWorks Modular Storage Array 1000 and EVA3000), also met our in-house requirements best."

The most forward-looking storage solution

The fact that Xylos chose the EVA3000 had everything to do with the fact that the most forward-looking solution also brought enhanced performance, greater capacity, and higher availability than conventional storage architectures. The company opted for a decentralized system because Xylos has a number of offices located in Brussels, Antwerp and Moscow, as well as a wide range of other operating and business-related activities. All of the company's employees now have direct access to all data, regardless of where they are located. The EVA3000 also offers many other technical capabilities, which is extremely important for a company like Xylos that has to provide support for its customers at all times. The system also guarantees zero downtime back-up, as well as seamless support for the company's continued growth.

"What finally convinced me is the fact that the software of the EVA3000 focuses on the important things," adds Wijckmans. "We don't want to spend our time managing disks; we want to manage data. An ERP environment also requires business-critical solutions, and the EVA3000 fits the bill perfectly."

An additional plus is that implementation has many benefits to offer Xylos customers. "Introducing the EVA3000 was like a real-life case study that we wanted to demonstrate to our customers. They can come here and see such a system running before their very eyes. And while it represents a major investment, it also shows them how they can solve their day-to-day problems. As a result, our Systems & Applications Integration Department has written to a number of existing customers and new business prospects who we know are thinking about buying a system of this kind. In the weeks ahead, they will visit us to look at our new IT infrastructure. Demonstrations can then be set up afterwards for specific areas such as data backup. We have developed actual scenarios for this purpose that delve more deeply into the types of problems that crop up everywhere, such as instantly increasing storage on demand, zero downtime backup, and restoring a single mailbox (Microsoft Exchange). This involves practical explanations, because we know from experience virtually nobody is aware any more about the bits and bytes of a machine. What people want are solutions, to be able to implement reliable concepts," concludes Volders.

Company profile:

Founded in 1983, Xylos (www.xylos.be) delivers top-end, total ICT solutions for system integration and training. With offices in Brussels, Antwerp, and Moscow, the company has gained a great deal of experience with international infrastructure projects in a number of different areas. Xylos employs a staff of approximately 100. The company generated a turnover of \$14.6 million (EUR) in the 2002 financial year. It is part of the AXE group, in conjunction with the logistics company Ahlers and environmental consultants Ecolas.



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Challenge

- Recommend solutions that will meet customers' return on investment (ROI) targets
- Support the company's managed services and future growth
- Implement a new storage system that provides robust performance and technical capabilities
- Improve data access at various company locations

Solution

Hardware

- HP StorageWorks Enterprise Virtual Array 3000 (EVA3000)

Software

- Navision ERP system

Results

- Provides hands-on experience and helps customers make quality, cost-effective technology decisions
- Enables the company to expand its expertise and share its knowledge with customers
- Supports Xylos growing database, thus improving managed services and optimizing business activities
- Guarantees high performance, capacity, and availability; zero downtime backup; and seamless support for continued growth
- Gives employees access to all data, regardless of their location

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