

Getty Images embraces HP standardization and adaptive management practices for business agility

change + hp

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– Kenneth Stringer
Vice President of Technical Operations
Getty Images

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Getty Images is the world’s leading provider of imagery, film and digital services. Many of its digital assets are used by advertising agencies, and working closely with Hollywood filmmakers, the Company supplies film clips for major motion pictures, television and other video communications. The editorial side of the business is comprised of news, sports and entertainment, operating globally 7x24 to bring photographers’ images – from newsworthy locations such as Iraq, sports venues and events of many different types – to its customers as fast as possible. Currently, the Company’s web site supports more than 1.8 million unique visitors per month.

Growth has its challenges

Founded in 1995, Getty Images was formed by the acquisition of over 20 very small- to medium-sized companies, which created some unique IT challenges. Kenneth Stringer, Vice President of Technical Operations for Getty Images, explained, “With the merger of so many small companies, we acquired an infrastructure containing a wide array of components, including servers from HP, Dell and Gateway. Part of my objective was to reduce the complexity of the IT environment to simplify support.”

The heterogeneous nature of the legacy equipment existed at all levels of the environment and was destined to continue because each entity of the newly formed Company was conditioned to purchase equipment autonomously. Stringer described, “There were lots of silo products in operation. For example, I wanted to standardize the Company’s storage environment and before we had made a final decision from the vendor evaluation process, our London data center purchased a competitive vendor’s solution! It was very evident that we had to rein in these activities, stop the independent purchase of equipment and streamline the processes in order to keep operational costs as low as possible.”

It is critical for the IT infrastructure to swiftly meet the Company’s growth and be in position to support new

business opportunities. Stringer said, “This business evolves rapidly and some changes are sizable. For example, Getty Images plans to simplify management of its vast image archive, respond faster to customer needs, all the while adding a broader selection of images. IT has to be in position to facilitate this change.”

Forming a powerful partnership

Stringer wanted to create one rationalized global IT environment. He elaborated, “I wanted to standardize on one vendor and on specific models of equipment so that it would dramatically simplify support and help maintain a highly available environment. My goal was to forge a strong relationship with a single vendor to address the ongoing needs of the business.”

Potential vendors included major hardware manufacturers, Stringer had positive prior experiences with HP and was pleased with the broad solution selection it had to offer. He commented, “In September 2003, we decided on HP as the right partner for us because of its strong product lines, excellent support, and alignment of strategy with Getty Images’ vision.”

Core to the foundation of the HP Adaptive Enterprise strategy is the concept of ‘virtualization.’ By creating a virtualized infrastructure, people, process and technology are focused on service levels, capacity is allocated dynamically, resources are fully optimized, and the entire infrastructure is simplified and flexible. Getty Images planned to create an enormous worldwide library for all of its digital assets, and wanted to embark on a path towards an Adaptive Enterprise infrastructure to support it.

Selecting core components on which to standardize

The Company operates two data centers in Seattle, Washington, and one in London, England. Between the three data centers there are a total of over 400 servers, and as the existing applications rely on Intel®-based platforms, Stringer chose to standardize on the HP ProLiant DL380s and DL580s. The ProLiant DL380

2-way servers were selected for their integrated lights-out functionality, performance, and space-saving form factor. The ProLiant DL580 servers were picked for their outstanding levels of 4-way server performance, hot-plug mirrored memory capability, and integrated management tools.

For the global storage environment Getty Images needed immense capacity to handle its digital assets and have them available worldwide 7x24. Stringer recalled, "Our storage expert was sold on the HP StorageWorks

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EVA5000 disk array as being a high performance, high capacity and high availability virtual RAID storage solution able to handle our 70,000 film clips and still images. It meets our needs for improved storage utilization, and it can easily scale to meet our typical annual growth rate of four terabytes per year, while addressing application-specific demands for consistently high transaction I/O and data rate performance. It also delivers seamless capacity expansion and easy storage administration – helping us on our way to a simplified support environment."

Within Getty Images' 7x24 network operations center HP OpenView software is used to simplify and automate infrastructure management. HP OpenView layers powerful, consolidated solutions onto a comprehensive set of industry best-practice templates – delivering an easily deployable and highly adaptive world-class service management capability. Stringer noted, "This functionality increases our staff's efficiency and reduces the ongoing cost of operations."

The Company also is underway with standardization at the desktop with eighty percent of the PCs now HP Compaq Business Desktop d530 PCs. "It was important for us to create a global standard for personal computing to simplify and improve manageability," Stringer explained.

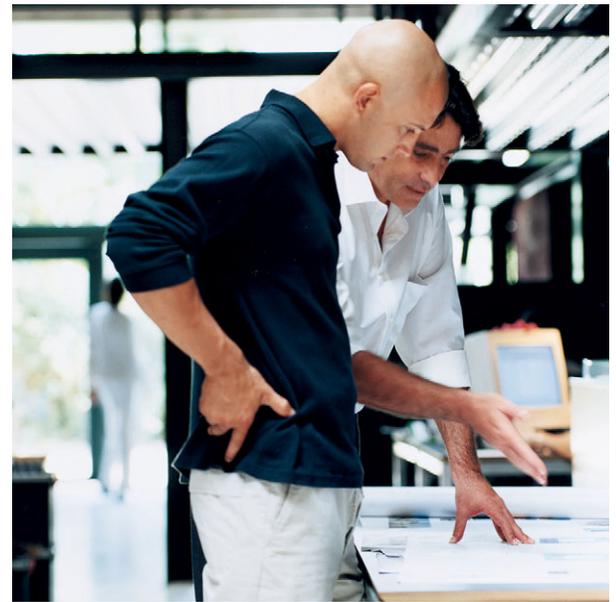
Mobile workers use HP Compaq Business Notebook PCs as a portable office with built-in wireless capabilities, enabling them to access the Internet from hot-spots in cafes and hotels. More than half of the laptops have been replaced with HP Compaq Business Notebook nc4000 and nc6000 PCs because they are wireless, very portable, durable and more than powerful enough for demanding digital media applications.

Leveraging enterprise agility

By keeping the environment straightforward the risk of components not functioning as expected is effectively

mitigated. "We have availability measures in place – monitoring uptime and application response time – to ensure the infrastructure is meeting the expected service levels, and the HP solutions are performing well. If service interruptions should occur on a production server, identically configured servers can quickly be enabled in a fail-over mode. The standardization has sped up support processes because everything is consistent and simpler to manage," noted Stringer.

An HP Adaptive Enterprise infrastructure will help Getty Images maximize its return on investment. Stringer elaborated, "The more simply we can make the infrastructure operate, the more cost effective we can be. This even includes the partnership contract with HP. By not having to keep sending out lots of requests for proposals or worry about integrating diverse solutions from different vendors, we keep procurement simple and efficient. We just turn to HP, describe what we need, and it delivers!"



"We're really looking to leverage the HP Adaptive Enterprise strategy to maximum effect. For example, it will make us more flexible, especially if we need to roll a newly acquired business into our infrastructure. Today, as we grow, servers can be added into the clustered HP ProLiant environment and more storage can be inserted into the HP StorageWorks EVA5000 systems to supplement our current 28 terabytes of capacity. It makes us very agile from a business perspective, while keeping the operational costs optimally low. Additionally, standardizing on HP PCs will allow for more cost effective image management, as well as simplified servicing processes which increases my end-user satisfaction."

Stringer concluded, "HP is totally in synchronization with our business. I feel very good about the partnership and we're continually collaborating to explore ways in which HP can help other areas of Getty Images' business."

At a glance

- **Company:** Getty Images
- **Headquarters:** Seattle, Washington
- **Founded:** 1995
- **2003 Revenues:** \$523.2 million
- **Telephone:** (206) 925-5000
- **URL:** www.gettyimages.com
- **Primary business:** An imagery company, creating and providing the largest and most relevant collection of still and moving images to communication professionals around the globe.

Challenges

- Reduce the extensive heterogeneous nature of the IT environment to simplify support.
- Eliminate silo operations to streamline operations and lower operational costs.
- Ensure IT can meet Company growth and support new business opportunities.

Solution

- Standardize on HP at all levels of the infrastructure:
 - HP ProLiant DL380 and DL580 servers
 - HP StorageWorks EVA5000 disk arrays
 - HP OpenView
 - HP Compaq Business Desktop d530 PCs
 - HP Compaq Business Notebook nc4000 and nc6000 PCs

Results

- Infrastructure is meeting service level agreements, while being simpler and more cost efficient to manage.
- Support processes are completed more quickly due to standardization of components.
- Return on IT investment has been maximized.
- Newly acquired businesses can swiftly be embraced by the infrastructure.
- IT agility for meeting dynamic business needs.

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