



Success Story

Alberta Medical Association: Connecting, Serving, and Advocating for Alberta's Physicians



Another NetApp
solution delivered by:



Long View



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Industry
Healthcare

The Challenge

Provide easy access to a growing portfolio of programs and services to support Alberta physicians and their practices.

The Solution

Replace a siloed, aging IT infrastructure with an agile, efficient, and easily managed FlexPod® Datacenter solution to lower operational costs and enhance membership benefits.

Benefits

- Achieve low-risk deployment and fast ramp-up with prevalidated, pretested FlexPod solution
- Accelerate program delivery and enhance website application performance with NetApp® Flash Pool™ intelligent caching
- Reduced storage consumption by 91% in VMware® Horizon™ environment with NetApp deduplication

Educating and empowering physicians since 1906

Navigating the evolving landscape of Canada's publicly funded and federally governed universal healthcare system can be challenging for both experienced physicians and doctors still in training. For that reason, nearly 10,000 physicians, residents, and medical students rely on nonprofit Alberta Medical Association (AMA) to advocate for them and support them as they strive to deliver top-quality care.

Whether it's securing a scholarship, booking a seminar on billing, or obtaining parental leave and retention benefits, an AMA membership connects physicians to helpful resources and valuable information to guide and assist them throughout their careers. AMA leaders and partners also provide a powerful voice for Alberta physicians in shaping policy and negotiating compensation through committees, public campaigns, and other efforts.

"Our programs, as well as a growing number of online services and tools, support physicians in many ways, from educational and professional to financial," says Joel McGovern, director of Information Technology at AMA.

"We're enhancing the breadth and accessibility of our offerings to health-care providers by taking advantage of IT advances to improve efficiencies across our operations."

The Challenge

Optimizing the value of membership

Since nearly all Alberta physicians are AMA members, the association's focus is less on recruitment and more on finding better ways to serve members. As a nonprofit organization, AMA must make the most out of limited budgets. IT plays a key role, and with many of AMA's siloed server, storage, and networking components nearing end of life and requiring more upkeep, the time was right to take the association's IT strategy in a new direction.

A converged IT infrastructure was appealing for several reasons. A standardized, centrally controlled infrastructure would mean fewer panes of glass for AMA's small IT team to manage. With a simpler and more efficient approach to day-to-day administration there would be more time to work on initiatives directly benefitting the membership. The power and resource flexibility of such an infrastructure would

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Joel McGovern

Director of Information Technology, AMA

also enable faster response to member needs and accelerate time to delivery for new programs and services.

The Solution

NetApp Star Partner and FlexPod Premier Partner Long View won AMA's business in a competitive RFP process with other top vendors by presenting a converged VMware on FlexPod Datacenter solution from NetApp and Cisco. By satisfying AMA's requirements for agility, efficiency, and management simplicity, Long View's proposal took AMA's IT transformation one step further. The partner also presented a way for AMA to cost-efficiently upgrade its disaster recovery (DR) site, while standardizing storage across the enterprise.

“NetApp and Long View have built a great relationship with us over the years, offering strong solutions and capable delivery,” says Kurt Reifferscheid, BSc., manager, Technology-Information Systems at AMA. “This time they impressed us by showing a way to rearchitect both production and DR sites while enabling us to preserve existing investments in NetApp and VMware expertise and equipment.”

A fast-tracked transition to a unified infrastructure

Right-sized and deployed by Long View, with active involvement from AMA's IT team, the organization's new FlexPod

Datacenter infrastructure was up and running a week earlier than specified. Completed in almost 50 fewer hours, the streamlined deployment also came in under budget by over \$10,000 dollars.

The work involved consolidating all data residing on third-party storage to a new NetApp Data ONTAP® controlled FAS2240HA storage system with twenty-four 600GB SAS drives. AMA's aging servers and networking equipment were replaced by advanced Cisco® Unified Computing System™ (UCS™) blade servers supported by Cisco Nexus® switches and Cisco UCS fabric interconnects.

Seamless integration of the FlexPod infrastructure with AMA's existing NetApp and VMware technology enabled AMA's IT team to quickly migrate 150 virtual machines and 25TB of data. “With several years of NetApp and VMware experience behind us we were able to handle 90% of the migration processes on our own,” explains Reifferscheid. “We quickly got up to speed on the Cisco side of things with certified FlexPod courses offered through Fast Lane, an authorized NetApp, Cisco, and VMware training partner.”

NetApp SnapMirror® technology, NetApp FlexClone® volumes, and a repurposed NetApp FAS2040A storage system from the primary data center also facilitated a

money-saving DR upgrade. All deployments and migrations were completed in a little over a month's time.

Business Benefits

Higher performance and efficiency

Enhancing everything from speed of staff response to a better website experience, NetApp Flash Pool technology efficiently amplifies performance across all of AMA's tier 1 applications, including VMware Horizon; Microsoft® Exchange Server, SharePoint® Server, Domain Name Services, and Internet Information Services; and Microsoft SQL Server® and Oracle® databases. AMA's Flash Pool is equipped with six 200GB SSDs and eighteen 3TB SATA drives within a power- and space-saving hybrid storage array that leverages automated storage tiering to deliver high performance at a lower cost than that of competing flash solutions.

NetApp deduplication capabilities are also hard at work conserving storage resources across the infrastructure. In the case of AMA's VMware Horizon environment, NetApp deduplication has helped reduce storage consumption by 91%. The legacy storage previously supporting this environment required over 5TB. “As a nonprofit with a limited budget, anything that lowers our IT

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Kurt Reifferscheid, BSc.

Manager, Technology-Information Systems, AMA

costs means we can direct more money into activities that directly serve our membership,” says Reifferscheid.

Integrated management and visibility across the stacks

One of AMA’s primary expectations for the FlexPod infrastructure was to simplify management and automate a wide variety of day-to-day tasks, from policy-based provisioning to lightning-fast backup of the association’s 150-desktop VMware Horizon environment. Powerful, easy-to-use NetApp tools and plug-ins such as NetApp OnCommand® System Manager, the NetApp SnapManager® Suite, and Virtual Storage Console for VMware vSphere work in tandem with Cisco UCS Manager and VMware vSphere and VMware vCenter™ software to provide a fast, cohesive approach for managing AMA’s converged infrastructure. AMA also leverages NetApp OnCommand Balance, a powerful analytics and modeling tool that facilitates proactive performance and capacity management as well as troubleshooting support.

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compression. These capabilities were not supported on our previous non NetApp storage platforms,” says Reifferscheid.

Far-reaching benefits for all

Today, AMA’s FlexPod infrastructure plays a vital role in helping the organization’s IT team, membership staff, and even AMA committee leaders and partners better connect, serve, and advocate for Alberta’s physicians. Here’s how.

- **Improved accessibility to programs and services**—Supported by the performance, capacity, and reliability of its FlexPod infrastructure, AMA is confidently moving forward with its goal to make all member programs and services accessible through its website within 12 to 18 months.

Recent additions to the online services include secure file transfer platforms for Physician Locum billing and helpful tools that provide instant access to changing compensation rates and codes for streamlined invoicing. Paperless membership activation and renewals are also planned to make it easier for physicians to join and stay current.

- **More ways to connect**—By combining the power of the FlexPod infrastructure with Cisco Unified Communications Manager (CallManager) technology,

AMA is opening up new and more cost-efficient ways for its leadership, partners, members, and staff to interact with one another. By transitioning from a legacy phone system to a new Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP) solution, AMA expects to not only lower telephony expenses but also support rich media services. These include such capabilities as virtual conferencing, which would make regularly held activities such as AMA committee meetings and billing seminars for members more convenient and accessible.

- **New ways to serve**—The ability to support rapid deployment of new virtual machines with various service levels makes FlexPod a true business enabler for AMA, accelerating time to delivery for new programs and services. Easy extension, reclamation, and repurposing of resources also help AMA support a wide range of short-term projects, including testing and development, process improvement initiatives such as those to optimize physicians’ healthcare delivery, and even grant-funded research programs.

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About Long View

Long View is one of the most powerful IT solutions and services companies in North America, with offices across the continent. With a clear focus on combining business and technology through our Hybrid IT solutions, including cloud, IT infrastructure, managed services, and end user support, Long View is able to define and customize what the future of IT looks like for its clients. Innovative, flexible, cost-effective, and business focused...that's Long View.

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SOLUTION COMPONENTS

FlexPod Components

NetApp FA2240HA and FAS2040A storage systems running NetApp Data ONTAP 8.1.4 and equipped with NetApp Flash Pool

Cisco Unified Computing System (UCS) 5108 chassis with B200 M3 blade servers supported by Cisco UCS Manager

Cisco Nexus 5548 switches

Cisco UCS 6248 fabric interconnects

Virtualization Components

VMware vSphere® 5.5

VMware vCenter 5.5

VMware Horizon 5.3

NetApp Software

NetApp OnCommand System Manager

NetApp OnCommand Balance

NetApp SnapManager Suite

NetApp Virtual Storage Console for VMware vSphere

NetApp SnapMirror

NetApp FlexClone

NetApp deduplication

Third-Party Software

Microsoft Exchange Server 2010, SharePoint Server 2013, SQL Server 2012, Domain Name Services, and Internet Information Services 6/7

Oracle Enterprise Database 11g, Warehouse Builder 11g, WebLogic 11g

OpenText Website Manager 11

IBM Cognos 10

Cisco Unified Communications Manager 10.5

Protocols

NFS, CIFS, iSCSI



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