

# Hostworks



## Customer profile

Provides web hosting services to some of the Asia-Pacific's most demanding online, business and media organisations

## Industry

Technology

## Location

Sydney, New South Wales

## Solution

Backup and recovery

## EMC products

EMC Avamar  
EMC Data Protection Advisor  
EMC Operations Intelligence  
VMware vSphere

## Benefits

- Reduced backup windows from hours to minutes
- Cut volume of daily data backups by 99 per cent
- Enabled the company to offer disaster recovery services to customers
- Improved capacity planning to meet demand through improved trend forecasting

## Hosting Company Deduplicates Data, Eliminates Tape and Achieves Faster Backup and Recovery

### Business overview

Founded in 1999, Hostworks provides web hosting, demand management, high-transaction websites and video streaming services to some of Australia's most well-known brands.

Acquired by broadcasting services company Broadcast Australia in March 2008, Hostworks employs 60 to 80 operational and administrative staff. It provides business-critical online services to some of the region's most demanding online, business and media organisations.

Hostworks' customers include broadcasters ABC, Network TEN and Prime; ticketing firm Ticketek; and online companies Carsales, ninemsn, realestate.com.au and Seek.

### Challenges

The hosting provider has a long history of upgrading its systems to provide better service to its customers. In 2005, Hostworks evaluated options for deploying a more flexible, cost-effective infrastructure, while in 2009 it began examining ways to improve data protection and backup.

These reviews have helped the organisation build web hosting services that could meet the needs of those customers that required dedicated infrastructure and those best suited to a shared environment.

### EMC solution

Hostworks' 2005 review found virtualisation was maturing as a means of improving return on hardware investments while managing server workloads reliably and efficiently.

The hosting provider evaluated VMware's market-leading server virtualisation technologies to support large-scale production websites.

Hostworks now selectively uses this virtualised infrastructure to support individual customer sites through its web hosting services. It has also become a component of Hostworks' new shared 'elastic computing' environment. This service cost-effectively supports peaks and troughs in demands for website access, while reducing the need for customers to invest capital in new capacity. It also expedites application development and testing, minimising the risks involved in deploying new capabilities.

In 2009, Hostworks began examining ways to improve data protection and backup for its dedicated hosting customers. It had been using a traditional model where customer information was backed up to disk and then to tape, but wanted to streamline its approach.

When considering its options, Hostworks banked on EMC's track record of providing reliable, efficient storage and information lifecycle management. The performance of the EMC CLARiON networked storage systems that Hostworks used to store some customer data in the hosted environment provided a particularly strong case to further explore EMC's technologies. The company also considered the close relationship between EMC and VMware, and the seamless interoperability of their products.

EMC then demonstrated to Hostworks Avamar's ability to provide data backup and recovery, deliver a disaster recovery service and use source-based data deduplication to reduce backup windows.

### **Backup Windows Cut from Hours to Minutes**

A small proof-of-concept test with existing data revealed Hostworks could deduplicate up to 99 per cent of data for some customers, reduce backup windows from hours to minutes and dispense with backup tapes. Hostworks now retains customer data online for 30 days, while replicating it daily to a second datacentre to ensure business continuity in the event of a disaster.

In October, Hostworks deployed Avamar across a four-node grid that provided 8TB of deduplicated data capacity. By applying source-based deduplication when replicating data between the hosting provider's Sydney and Adelaide datacentres, Hostworks' salespeople could offer an extremely competitive price for disaster recovery services.

### **Avamar Use to Expand**

The success of the Avamar deployment has prompted Hostworks to expand the size of its grid to 10 nodes, giving it approximately 20TB of deduplicated data capacity.

The hosting provider is also planning to use Avamar to provide backup and recovery services for its elastic computing service. Avamar's source-based data deduplication is optimised for virtualised environments such as that provided by VMware.

**“We found EMC Avamar cost-effectively met all our backup, recovery and deduplication requirements.”**

**Adrian Britton, General Manager of Technology, Strategy and Innovation**

“EMC Avamar cost-effectively met our need for source-based deduplication, and effective backup and recovery,” said Adrian Britton, General Manager of Technology, Strategy and Innovation, Hostworks.

### **Reporting Tools Provide Deep Insight into Environment**

To complement the EMC Avamar deployment, Hostworks is using EMC Data Protection Advisor to automate the collection and analysis of information from its backup and recovery systems. This enables customers to view the status of their systems through a dedicated portal, providing an additional level of protection for their data.

Hostworks also uses the EMC IT Operations Intelligence Suite to extract information about, and report on, customer environments.

“We use a range of tools and technologies to monitor and report on our entire heterogeneous infrastructure, and the EMC IT Operations Intelligence Suite feeds into this,” said Britton. “We are in the business of managing unpredictable demand, so these tools play an absolutely critical role. Longer term, they also allow us to undertake trend analysis and forecasting so we can plan our infrastructure requirements.”

The reliability and performance of EMC products is paying dividends for Hostworks. In September 2010, the company announced it had expanded its hosting contract with Amalgamated Holdings Ltd, owner of Event Cinemas, Greater Union, Birch Carroll & Coyle Cinemas, Rydges Hotels and Resorts, and the Thredbo ski resort. It beat nine other operators in a comprehensive tender process to secure the contract.

In addition, Hostworks' business model enabled TV and radio broadcaster SBS to access capacity to support peak demand for its World Game website for the duration of the 2010 football World Cup. During the tournament, the World Game site received 1.5 million unique visitors, and delivered more than 25 million page impressions and 2 million video views.

## Summary

Hostworks provides web hosting, demand management, high-transaction websites and video streaming services to some of Australia's best-known brands. In 2009, Hostworks began looking at ways of improving backup and recovery for its dedicated and shared hosting services, and selected EMC Avamar. The success of the deployment has prompted the organisation to expand the size of its Avamar grid from four to 10 nodes, giving it 20TB of deduplicated data capacity.



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