

Nominee: NATS/Violin Memory

Supporting Vendor: Violin Memory

Nomination title: NATS Selects Violin Memory Flash Storage for Virtual Desktop Infrastructure

What was the driving force behind the project – what business or technology challenge needed to be addressed?

NATS, the leading provider of air navigation services and solutions in the UK, needed to implement a large-scale project to transfer all of its desktop IT services to a cloud-based infrastructure. The driving force behind the project was to create a secure, virtual desktop environment so the company could deliver an improved user experience at a lower infrastructure costs. NATS wanted to deploy wholly new application capabilities to their user population without having to involve any 'rip and replace technologies'.

How did the solution address the challenges and were there any particularly innovative aspects that made it stand out?

Violin Memory deployed 6000 Series flash Memory Arrays, each of which provide over 1 million IOPS at ultra-low latency. This was a critical choice in addressing the business challenges as high availability was of paramount concern. Violin flash Memory Arrays offer industry leading levels of redundancy, making it the natural choice for this mission critical VDI deployment.

"To cater for the heavy loads generated by boot storms and logoff periods, traditional storage area network (SAN) based solution would have required many shelves of disks, consumed more power, required significant cooling and incurred higher maintenance costs," explains Gavin Walker, Chief Information Officer for NATS.

He continues, *"We needed a high performance solution which would scale to at least 6,000 seats with no appreciable degradation to user experience. Using Violin Memory will also introduce a resilient architecture, avoiding single points of failure."*

What tangible benefits has the organisation seen as a result of the project's implementation?

This is the largest implementation of cloud-based infrastructure in the transport sector to date. It has allowed for more effective collaboration between NATS staff and business partners over multiple geographic regions. Staff members have access to the services, information and applications they need for their particular role, creating a customised experience.

The Violin Memory Arrays are forecast to reduce costs by £9 million over four years, shrink NATS's environmental footprint, improve flexibility, meet their demanding SLAs and deliver a significantly improved quality of service to around 4,500 users.

Why nominee should win:

- Violin Memory's solution has successfully catered for a multi-million pound project, which represents the largest implementation of cloud-based infrastructure in the transport sector to date
- This project clearly demonstrates the advantages of a virtualised infrastructure, requiring lower maintenance while performing better than traditional storage infrastructures
- Violin Memory's solution met every single aspect of NATS's demands. While these were complex and wide-ranging, the flash storage Arrays proved an innovative solution which delivered a significant return on investment as well as a much improved user experience