



NetApp®

Success Story

Proact Builds Portfolio of Service Offerings on NetApp Service-Oriented Infrastructure



PROACT

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Industry

Managed cloud services

The Challenge

Provide enterprise-class disaster recovery and other services at an affordable price.

The Solution

Safeguard client data with a cloud-based, service-oriented infrastructure built on NetApp® unified storage systems and software.

Benefits

- Supported diverse customer needs, applications, and budgets
- Built tiered service model on unified storage (FCoE, FC, iSCSI, NAS) platform to support StaaS model
- Managed six petabytes of storage with two administrators
- Instantaneously recovered customer data
- Reduced TCO while improving service levels

Customer Profile

Founded in 1994, Proact is an experienced independent integrator of proven storage, backup/recovery, archiving, and disaster recovery solutions and services. With its 2011 acquisition of Databasement—one of the first companies to deliver storage as a service (StaaS)—Proact has broadened its portfolio to support enhanced data management solutions and services. Proact gives organizations the freedom to choose to keep their IT infrastructure in-house, partially in-house, or contracting it out by leveraging managed cloud services. Today, operating from data centers across Europe, Proact is the largest European independent storage integrator and a top provider of disaster recovery services to organizations in services, public sector, media, telecom, banking and finance, oil and energy, and other sectors with stringent information management requirements.

The Challenge

Meeting diverse customer requirements

Organizations tap Proact’s services for a variety of needs, from healthcare organizations archiving sensitive patient data to companies needing instant

access to mission-critical financial records. Proact must therefore support an array of applications and databases as well as varying requirements for storage performance, availability, and capacity.

“We wanted to provide a better alternative to tape backup and recovery, bring down customer costs, and improve service levels. We knew that a shared, disk-based storage infrastructure would enable us to do all three,” says Rob Christ, VP Managed Cloud Services Proact.

Cost-effective options for safeguarding mission-critical data

To deliver cost-effective, cloud-based storage services, Proact had to build an exceptionally cost-effective infrastructure while providing enterprise-class storage services. For customers, backup processes needed to be consistent and reliable and occur within a few seconds, without impacting end users. Proact had to deliver guaranteed application availability and adhere to service-level agreements (SLAs). A tiered service model was another priority, from mission-critical primary data and application hosting to compliance-level archival data storage.

“NetApp’s ease of use and powerful software tools enable us to manage six petabytes of online data with only two full-time administrators.”

Tjeerd Bloembergen

Director for Business Unit BeNeLux and Spain Proact

Getting ahead in the cloud

For Proact, the top priority was a storage platform that would enable the company to build a profitable business model. First, the storage technology had to be unified and streamline backup, recovery, and disaster recovery (DR) across a wide range of different customer environments. To lower costs, Proact had to use standard IP networking, support high utilization, and manage the infrastructure with modest IT resources. Incremental scalability was another important requirement.

“We wanted to purchase storage ‘just in time’ and scale as needed, all while allowing all of our primary disaster recovery processes to continue without interruption,” says Tjeerd Bloembergen, Director for Business Unit BeNeLux and Spain Proact.

The Solution

Unified storage, rich functionality

After considering other vendors, Proact selected NetApp. “It became clear very quickly that NetApp was the only storage technology that could even come close to the simplicity and power we needed,” says Christ. “It was true then, and it is still true today.”

Proact began building the foundation for its disaster recovery services with NetApp NearStore® R200 disk-based near-line storage systems. It has since expanded to include a variety of NetApp FAS storage systems, some with NetApp MetroCluster software for

customers needing the most reliable business resilience solutions.

Today, Proact’s NetApp environment also supports a growing virtualized environment. “Vital to our Proact solution is a unique service-oriented infrastructure (SOI) based on NetApp, VMware®, and Cisco that includes all server, storage, and networking hardware and software to facilitate sharing, reuse, and dynamic resource allocation,” says Christ. “Important features of the SOI include elastic scalability, integrated data recovery, advanced automation, and the ability to transparently migrate both applications and data across the infrastructure.”

Simplifying storage management across diverse environments

On the disaster recovery side, Proact uses NetApp Snapshot™ technology to create point-in-time copies of customers’ file systems and the NetApp SnapMirror® solution for protocol-agnostic replication over standard IP that enables near-instantaneous recovery of customer data. NetApp SnapVault® software is used for block-level disaster recovery and Open Systems SnapVault (OSSV) enables Proact to provide data recovery services for customers who do not own NetApp storage. NetApp SnapLock® software enables Proact to archive customers’ regulated data.

“With OSSV, we can replicate customer data into the NetApp environment even if the customer does not have a NetApp

system, so we can provide very high SLAs in terms of recoverability—from zero to four hours, for example,” says Christ.

NetApp deduplication not only successfully supports Proact’s VMware environment but also helps boost the company’s storage utilization to 80% or more, saving tens of thousands of dollars in storage spending annually. Another crucial tool for Proact is NetApp MultiStore® software, which provides secure partitioning of shared storage and network resources so multiple domains and servers can be consolidated on a single storage system without risk. And, with secure multi-tenancy across the entire SOI, Proact can keep costs down by hosting multiple customers on the same infrastructure.

To simplify storage management, Proact uses NetApp System Manager, built into the Data ONTAP® operating system. “With the new, simplified interface and consolidated feature set of System Manager, managing NetApp technology is simpler than ever,” Christ relates.

NetApp Operations Manager and Protection Manager software enable administrators at Proact to monitor and manage all of the company’s NetApp systems, complete with alerts, reports, performance, and configuration tools to keep the NetApp storage infrastructure aligned with customer requirements. Additional data management tools such as SnapManager® for Oracle®, SnapManager for Microsoft® Exchange,

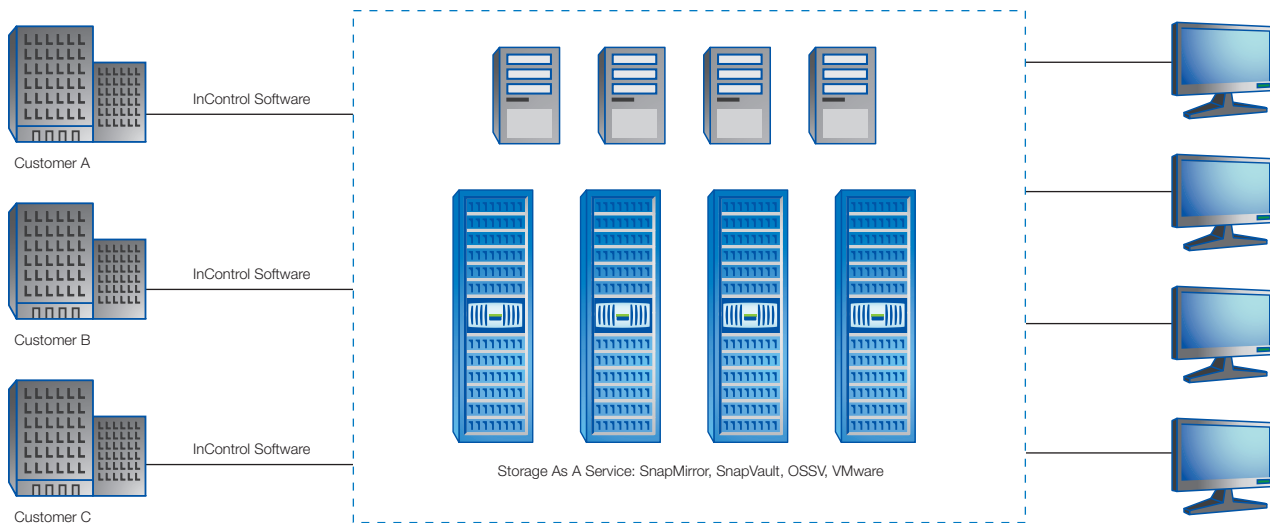


Figure 1) Proact cloud-based, service-oriented infrastructure built on NetApp storage systems and software.

SnapManager for Microsoft SQL Server®, and SnapManager for Microsoft Office SharePoint Server® help automate processes associated with backup, restoration, recovery, and cloning of customers' databases and applications.

Proact also uses InControl software to augment NetApp's comprehensive management software. InControl provides real-time view and control of the agreed-to SLAs between Proact and customers and streamlines ticketing and service requests as well as billing and reporting.

Business Benefits

Superb, flexible customer services

With NetApp, Proact can easily deliver a range of services to customers, from less costly archival storage on NetApp NearStore systems to high-performance, mission-critical storage on MetroCluster-enabled storage systems. The company can also support a wide array of customer applications such as SAP®, file shares like SharePoint, and databases such as Oracle and SQL. In addition, the company can meet customer requirements when it comes to preferred protocols, from Fibre Channel to NAS, iSCSI, FCoE, and CIFS. Proact has even deployed 10GbE FCoE at several customers.

"NetApp's multiprotocol support is critical for us," Christ states. "Regardless of what setup the customer has, we can use more cost-effective IP-based protocols on our side to avoid the cost of SAN connectivity, and the

option to deploy FCoE provides our customers with a strong performing protocol, as well as consolidation of network interfaces."

Because NetApp and VMware technologies work well together, Proact can easily support customer demand for virtualized environments for test and development, business intelligence, and other purposes. And, according to Bloembergen, the company has the agility to assemble the NetApp tools required to launch new services with efficiency and speed—within weeks or even days. This is something Bloembergen estimates could take months using other storage solutions. While the storage environment across Proact's Europe data centers is diverse, it can all be managed centrally.

"With the combination of NetApp and InControl software, we can define specific service tiers to address different segments of the market," says Bloembergen. "We can bill customers based on capacity, performance, availability, and functionality, yet still manage everything from a unified, 'single pane of glass.' In fact, NetApp's ease of use and powerful software tools enable us to manage six petabytes of online data with only two full-time administrators."

Business resilience for customers

NetApp's industry-leading replication is extremely fast and reliable, enabling Proact to meet SLAs that are adjustable based on customer needs. With NetApp

unified storage and technologies such as NetApp Snapshot copies, Proact can enable its customers' backup processes to be consistent and reliable so that their mission-critical data stays safe. Backups can occur within seconds and recovery is instantaneous to help provide business resilience.

Christ notes that NetApp keeps costs low, both for Proact and its customers. With NetApp deduplication, Proact has achieved in excess of 80% storage utilization, a key factor in keeping costs down and using less power and space. Savings on primary storage equates to less storage required for backup and replication. And when more storage is required, Proact can scale just in time, without disrupting ongoing customer services.

Proact's services are essential for many companies, including aircraft manufacturer Stork Fokker Aerostructures. Stork needed an efficient, money-saving solution for storage management and DR that would ensure continuous data availability. Proact implemented a NetApp FAS3140 cluster system as the primary storage solution, with NetApp NearStore R200 systems as secondary storage and data mirrored to a Proact data center as a tertiary copy. Proact handles all daily operational management of the company's data. For Stork, Proact's managed infrastructure helped the company eliminate risky tape backups and minimize data loss. RPO and RTO have been

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Rob Christ

VP Managed Cloud Services Proact

reduced from hours or days to minutes, all while lowering total cost of ownership.

ABN Amro's Netherlands Mortgage division worked with Proact to design, implement, and manage a storage infrastructure for both primary data and DR. To meet the client's stringent SLAs, Proact implemented a NetApp FAS3160 cluster as the primary storage infrastructure, which replicates to a DR “black box” site using VMware and an additional NetApp FAS3140 system. Benefits to ABN Amro include higher availability, elimination of backup windows, quicker restores, and technology consolidation. Using OSSV, Proact also can provide failover for servers not attached to the SAN.

“NetApp gives us our key differentiator—the ability to provide our customers with SLAs that are appropriate for their business at reasonable costs. Our services offer much better processes and reliability than our customers could achieve on their own,” says Christ. “That's the key to our success.”

SOLUTION COMPONENTS

NetApp Products

NetApp FAS2020, 2040, 2050, 3020, 3140, 3160, 3170, 6040, and 6080 systems

NetApp NearStore R200 systems

Data ONTAP 8

MetroCluster

MultiStore

Deduplication

SnapRestore®, SnapLock, SnapVault, Open Systems SnapVault

Operations Manager, Protection Manager, System Manager

SnapManager for Virtual Infrastructure, SnapManager for Microsoft SQL Server, SnapManager for Exchange, SnapManager for Oracle, SnapManager for SharePoint Server

Snapshot technology

Protocols

CIFS, NFS, Fibre Channel, iSCSI, FCoE

Third-Party Products

InControl software

Cisco Catalyst and Nexus switches

Brocade switches

VMware ESX 3.x, VMware vSphere™, and VDI

Riverbed WAN compression appliances

Environment

Applications: SAP, Microsoft SharePoint and Exchange, Dassault Catia, others

Server platform: Windows® 2003 and 2008 servers, VMware ESX and vSphere, Solaris™

Databases: Oracle, Microsoft SQL Server, others



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