



Variel Delivers Cost-Effective IP SAN for Mission-Critical Applications

Mission-critical fundraising, financial transactions, and mass mailing data stored on Wasabi Storage Builder® for iSCSI

Summary

■ Challenge

Application server running out of storage capacity
 Needed to easily add more storage without disruption to production system
 Limited storage budget

■ Solution

Variel IP SAN iSCSI solution powered by Wasabi Systems Storage Builder for iSCSI software

■ Benefits

Quickly integrated into existing IT environment
 Easy to manage
 Affordable

Case Background

The storage requirements for small and medium businesses (SMB) are continuing to increase at a rapid rate. In many cases, however, SMBs are not able to take advantage of the benefits of networked storage due to the cost and complexity of acquiring, configuring and managing these systems. The Variel IP SAN™ storage solution, running Wasabi Storage Builder® for iSCSI, delivers a networked storage solution that meets the reliability, performance, and ease of use requirements for mission critical applications at a price point that SMBs can afford.

Junior Blind of America, established in 1953, provides recreational services for blind or visually impaired children. Since its inception, with the help of a dedicated group of volunteers, Junior Blind of America's philosophy has been to provide unique programs and services to help individuals maximize their potential and achieve their highest possible level of independence. Today, Junior Blind of America provides services to more than 6,000 individuals each year from California and neighboring states through six exceptional programs that provide education, recreation, training, and rehabilitation.

To support their on-going efforts, Junior Blind of America relies on their extensive IT infrastructure encompassing many application servers as well as Exchange and general file and printing services. Their mission-critical fundraising application responsible for handling donations, financial transactions and mass mailing is a Microsoft SQL based application.

The Challenge

In early 2005, due to the constant growth of their SQL database, it became apparent that they needed a solid, simple and inexpensive storage upgrade solution. The database had been stored on hard drives installed inside the SQL server chassis. The process of adding hard drives to the server would entail shutting down the server and opening up the chassis to install the drives. This quick fix process was quickly identified as a non-scalable, stop-gap measure due to the limited space for additional drives inside the server chassis, not to mention the unacceptable downtime that would result.

“Storage Builder for iSCSI enables me to provide my customers IP SAN solutions that are powerful, robust, and fit into their budgets.”

Ali Asvadi, President, Variel Technology

“We knew we wanted to have a SAN so we could take advantage of the benefits of networked storage, including the ability to easily add more storage,” says Junior Blind of America Executive Vice President, Linda Falcone. “However, when we looked at the typical fibre channel SANs being offered, we knew that would be a budget-buster.”

About Storage Builder

■ Easy Installation

The intuitive GUI makes adding scalable storage as easy as plugging Variel's IP SAN into your network

■ Reliable

Complete RAID support so that drive failures don't result in data loss

■ Flexible

Can be used for primary storage, backup or disaster recovery

■ Cost Effective

All the features of much higher priced networked storage solutions

The Solution

Variel Technology is a leading provider of server and storage solutions located in Southern California. Junior Blind of America contacted Variel Technology and presented their situation.

"After analyzing Junior Blind of America's storage needs and budget, we quickly realized the answer to their dilemma was an IP SAN storage solution," says Ali Asvadi, Variel Technology's president. An IP SAN consists of iSCSI networked storage utilizing standard Ethernet cables, adapters, and switches. IP SANs enable small and medium businesses to realize the benefits of SAN storage, without the higher costs and added complexity associated with traditional SAN solutions.

For Variel Technology, offering high quality, reliable storage solutions is the foundation for delivering maximum value to their customers. To that end, they have chosen to build IP SANs using Wasabi Systems Storage Builder® for iSCSI, which enables the creation of powerful, yet cost-effective iSCSI storage systems.

"Storage Builder for iSCSI enables me to provide my customers IP SAN solutions that are powerful, robust, and fit into their budgets," says Asvadi. "Its flexibility allows me to provide just the right solution, and my customers love how easy it is to configure and manage."

The IP SAN solution for Junior Blind of America was installed during their lunch break without interruption to their production systems. Once the SQL application was re-initialized, none of the staff even realized that the entire SQL database was now on an external storage device.

According to Junior Blind of America's Linda Falcone, the Wasabi Systems Storage Builder IP SAN solution from Variel Technology was just the answer to their storage problem. In addition to solving their immediate storage needs and meeting their budget, they can easily scale up with additional IP SAN storage as their data capacity needs increase. "The Storage Builder IP SAN is a perfect solution for us. It allowed us to leverage our existing Gigabit Ethernet infrastructure, quickly and easily integrated into our existing Intel-based Microsoft Windows 2003 servers, and, most importantly, meant that we had more money available for our programs, which means that the ultimate beneficiaries are the children."

Conclusion

Junior Blind of America's implementation of an IP SAN based on Wasabi Storage Builder for iSCSI clearly demonstrates that this technology is cost-effective, scalable, easy to use, and suitable for mission-critical applications. Until now, small and medium businesses have not been able to take advantage of the benefits of networked storage due to prohibitive costs and management complexities. Variel Technology, in partnership with Wasabi Systems, has delivered an IP SAN solution that meets the requirements of SMBs. In this case, Junior Blind of America is able spend less money on IT and divert those funds to its mission of helping children.

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