

Chronopost, France's leading delivery service, needs to ensure packages arrive on time, every day. Therefore, 100% reliability is essential. After struggling with delays during peak holidays season, the IT team decided to upgrade the existing infrastructure, moving to all flash in 2015. This move increased productivity two to three fold and ensured a highly available system even during peak holiday time.

**BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION**

Chronopost streamlined its IT department, ensuring a highly reliability system to allow it to provide reliable service and support company growth.

GEO

France

INDUSTRY

Transportation

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Robert Radu,
IT infrastructures project manager

CHRONOPOST MAKES FLASH DELIVERIES THANKS TO PURE STORAGE

In France, Chronopost is part of DPDgroup, Europe's second-largest international parcel delivery service. Chronopost is France's leading delivery service provider for parcels weighing up to 30 kg for both businesses and individual customers. With a headcount of 3,500, Chronopost delivered more than 132 million parcels in 2015 and serves 230 countries worldwide. With its 100-strong IT department, Chronopost has always been in the forefront of new technologies, by opting for future market standards.

In 2012, Chronopost launched its “Objectif 24” plan that aims to guarantee 24/7 availability of its information system. The express parcel delivery company has gradually improved its IT by optimizing its network infrastructures, virtualizing its servers and improving its data center. At the end of 2014, experts reached a clear conclusion: the delays observed in the first three weeks of December — the peak period of the year for all conveyors of small parcels — were mainly due to the two parallel-mounted storage arrays, made up of hard disks.

HIGHER-PERFORMING STORAGE NEEDED TO SUPPORT GROWTH

The quest for an alternative solution started at the beginning of 2015. In keeping with its reputation as a pioneer, the company decided to do a complete system switchover to 100% flash storage arrays. Chronopost's position was quite clear: only 100% flash solutions could offer the expected gains in terms of performance, with the possibility of upgrading easily, supporting the 20% annual growth in data, reducing the complexity of operations, and cutting operational costs (electricity consumption and the floor space occupied in the data center).

In order to perform an accurate analysis, the IT department benchmarked three competing solutions in its own data centers, including Pure Storage, and qualified the performance of the different arrays under real-life conditions. For two months, Robert Radu, IT infrastructures project manager at Chronopost, and his team conducted performance, resilience, administration, deduplication and data compression tests.

Robert Radu recounted: “After these tests, Pure Storage was the leading solution. Moreover, the design of the arrays can handle the increase in data volumes, without having to invest in more processing power. Chronopost handles a mix of cold and hot data, so it is important to have the flexibility to easily increase storage capacity, at a minimal cost, and without investing in new controllers.”

COMPANY:

Chronopost
www.chronopost.fr

USE CASE:

- Databases – Oracle®, SAP® Sybase ASE, PostgreSQL, and MySQL
- Applications – EAI (Tibco®), EDI (TradeExpress®), financial and accounts apps (Oracle), BI (SAP), in-house apps (transport, tracking)
- VSI – VMware® vSphere®

CHALLENGES:

- Existing infrastructure was unable to handle peak performance time (holidays) and unable to scale with a 20% increase in data.
- Operational costs grew due to space and electricity consumption.
- Overall IT Operations were complex to run on a daily basis.

IT TRANSFORMATION:

- Access times were less than one millisecond during peak activity.
- Overall data has been reduced by more than 65%, with a 3:3:1 data reduction rate.
- Time taken to make corrections to the database has been reduced by 65%.
- Performance of the web ecosystem has been increased by 20%.

“Chronopost is delighted to have found a manufacturer that shares the same values as us: values based on commitment, innovation and adaptability that put the customer at the center of its concerns.”

Robert Radu,
IT infrastructures project manager



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EASE OF USE SWINGS DECISION TO PURE

Chronopost was also won over by the superior guaranteed deduplication rate offered by the Pure Storage platform. The company was also impressed by the Pure1® administration console that is “extremely intuitive and light years ahead of our previous storage array” and the Evergreen upgrade and controller replacement policy that allows customers to benefit from all software upgrades free of charge, with no hidden costs.

“The last, but not the least, argument was the presence of the teams from Pure Storage and its integrator Antemeta during the project,” said Radu. “This reassured us, because it is never easy to introduce a start-up into a well-established company. We have very high expectations in terms of the availability and responsiveness of our partners. Synergy was generated between the teams from the start until the end of the project.”

Once the choice had been made, the time came to install it. Between September and November 2015, 80% to 90% of data volumes were gradually migrated in order to permanently test the ramp-up and avoid any interruptions of the service. Everything went well and was completed on time in readiness for the peak in parcel delivery activity over the Christmas period.

PURE STORAGE IMPROVES APPLICATION PERFORMANCE

Everyone in Chronopost’s IT department was pleased to see that access times were less than one millisecond at times of peak activity, that the time taken to make corrections to the database had been reduced by more than 65%, that the performance of the web ecosystem had been increased by 20%, and that overall data had been reduced by more than 65%.

“In the past, storage was sensitive matter,” recalled Radu. “Whenever a problem occurred, it was always the storage arrays that were singled out. Pure Storage, with its easy-to-use and intuitive administration console, has boosted the confidence of the team in charge of storage, and also of all the other IT teams, which can now see the performances of the arrays for themselves.” The Pure Storage solutions have also slashed electricity consumption five-fold and reduced the storage footprint.

For Chronopost, the next step consists of benefiting from the Pure Storage Evergreen program and switching over to the latest-generation controllers that equip the FlashArray//m20, without interrupting service. “Chronopost is delighted to have found a manufacturer that shares the same values as us: values based on commitment, innovation and adaptability that put the customer at the center of its concerns,” concluded Radu. “Beyond all we have to do on the evolution of our arrays, we hope to develop a long-term partnership with Pure Storage and Antemeta.”