Internet Solutions Selects NetApp SolidFire and Becomes the First Service Provider in Africa to Offer Performance-Based Storage Tiering

SolidFire's all-flash platform delivers guaranteed performance and capacity at scale, while eliminating data migrations and cutting the cost of operational overhead in half

Johannesburg, July 26 2016— NetApp SolidFire (NASDAQ: NTAP), the leader in all-flash storage systems built for the Next Generation Data Center, has announced that Internet Solutions (IS), Africa's largest provider of managed network services, has deployed its all-flash scale-out storage. Powered by SolidFire's next-generation infrastructure that delivers guaranteed, predictable performance, IS is the first provider to offer performance-based tiered services to customers in Africa.

IS is a converged communications service provider operating in 14 countries across Africa, with international offices and points of presence worldwide. The majority of its customers are listed in the Fortune 2000 in Africa, including the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. As a wholly owned subsidiary of the Dimension Data Group and part of NTT, IS leverages its footprint and infrastructure to rapidly deploy emerging technologies to its global customer network of public and private sector organizations. With a large and growing cloud services delivery operation, planning for future storage capacity along with guaranteeing performance is essential to its success.

"Moving to all flash is the future. Spinning disk is on its way out. NetApp SolidFire has moved us to the forefront of our industry because we gained a high-performing and much faster storage platform. Tiering and QoS was an added benefit in the decision-making process, enabling us to become the first service provider on the African continent to offer performance-based tiering," said Andrew Green, cloud infrastructure manager, Internet Solutions.

SolidFire's unique scale-out architecture expands storage incrementally as demand dictates, with each additional node instantly increasing the capacity and performance of the system without disruption, the need to migrate data or perform forklift upgrades. This has led to a 50 percent

reduction in the cost of operational overhead for IS along with significant Cloud staff productivity gains. With its volume-level Quality of Service (QoS) controls, SolidFire provides IS with an all-flash storage platform that delivers guaranteed performance to thousands of application workloads from a single, shared infrastructure, eliminating noisy neighbor issues. And, the SolidFire system enables full automation with IS' Continuous Integration / Continuous Deployment (CI/CD) workflow, enabling DevOps services and virtual machines with containers to be deployed up to 15 times faster than with traditional architectures.

"We evaluated a number of leading storage vendors and NetApp SolidFire came out on top in terms of performance, risk, licensing, cost and modular scalability," said Kervin Pillay, director of technology, Internet Solutions. "Not only do we never have to do a forklift upgrade again, if we're growing in one location, we simply ship a node from one data center to another and it's up and running within minutes. The procurement time has plunged from three months down to four weeks and we can reduce this further to two weeks in the near future."

Assisted by international systems integrator ShapeBlue, IS will gradually migrate all its workloads to SolidFire's storage platform. When SolidFire was initially implemented, it was running across 23 VMware environments utilizing and integrating with VMWare SIOC to deliver guaranteed performance-based tiering at a per-VM disk level. However, IS also has an OpenStack-powered cloud designed around pay-as-you-use consumption model for its consumer space that runs side by side with its enterprise IaaS platforms. SolidFire's integration with OpenStack and the Cinder driver has proved invaluable in delivering the tiered services on this platform. "The integration of SolidFire with OpenStack is incredible. It is really providing significant value in that space from both integration and scalability perspectives," added Pillay.

"The partnership between IS, NetApp SolidFire and ShapeBlue is a prime example of technology innovation really fueling business. Using the SolidFire platform, IS was able to get into a planning cycle well ahead of capacity requirements to avoid any surprises and increase the agility of its business so it could, in turn, deliver tremendous value to its customers," said Dan Crowe, managing consultant, ShapeBlue.

"By leveraging an architecture Fueled By SolidFire, customers in Africa are gaining access to services that would not be available to them otherwise and as a result, they are transforming their businesses," said Stuart Oliver, worldwide service provider programs manager, NetApp SolidFire. "IS is gaining a significant edge over its competition and solidifying its position as the market leader."

Read the complete case study to learn more about how NetApp SolidFire enabled IS to transition to the Next Generation Data Center. Find out how SolidFire is enabling other customers' transition to next-generation data centers by visiting our library of customer success stories. Connect with us to learn how to implement a cost-effective, high-performance, all-flash storage platform - now and into the future.