



Photo by Merlin IT

“The SimpliVity solution is unbelievably easy to manage. A small team of IT generalists in our UK operations center efficiently supports theme parks and attractions all over the world.”

– Sean Channon, Global Infrastructure Architect, Merlin Entertainments

Introduction

Merlin Entertainments, the largest European-based entertainment company, operates 110 attractions in 23 countries across four continents. The company’s resort theme parks and midway attractions include world-renowned brands such as LEGOLAND® resorts, Madame Tussauds and SEA LIFE aquariums. Merlin standardized on SimpliVity hyperconverged infrastructure to streamline IT operations for its global attractions and theme parks. The SimpliVity solution eliminates IT cost and complexity and ensures high performance and availability for business-critical applications and data.

Business Challenge: Remote IT Infrastructure Modernization and Simplification

Merlin’s fragmented IT infrastructure was becoming increasingly costly and difficult to maintain and scale. The company relied on a mix of independent server, storage and data protection solutions at its remote sites. Equipment configurations and vendors varied widely from property to property. Administering and supporting the disjointed environment was a complicated and time-consuming process involving a number of distinct technology platforms and management interfaces.

Sean Channon, Global Infrastructure Architect for Merlin, initiated a modernization program to simplify operations and improve the economics, performance and reliability of the company’s distributed IT environment. After lab-testing a number of options including solutions from HP and EMC, Channon selected SimpliVity hyperconverged infrastructure as the standard operating environment for Merlin resort theme parks and midway attractions across the world.



£1.2 Billion Entertainment Company Standardizes on SimpliVity for Global Remote Site Infrastructure

Challenges: Refresh remote site IT infrastructure, simplify operations and reduce costs

Key Applications: revenue-critical retail systems, ticketing and admission systems, hotel management systems, core IT services (network, file, print, etc.), desktop and laptop build systems

Solution: SimpliVity hyperconverged infrastructure

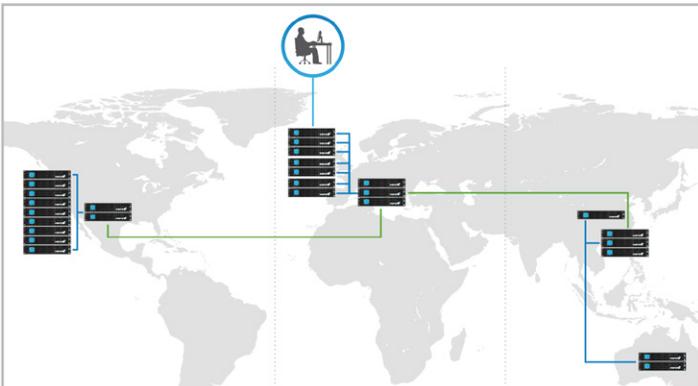
Benefits:

- Significant CAPEX and OPEX savings; 25% three-year TCO savings for new sites
- Rapid system deployment; new sites up and running in hours compared to days
- Radically simplified operations; IT generalists manage entire enterprise, IT specialists freed up for business innovation
- Ultra-compact footprint; three racks of legacy gear replaced by two 2U units in less than one rack at theme parks
- Streamlined support and logistics; single point of contact for all IT infrastructure issues
- Low storage costs; up to 45:1 data efficiency
- Improved data protection for critical applications; data backup and recovery in seconds or minutes
- Superior application performance; perceived 50% improvement

“SimpliVity provides the entire IT stack—hypervisor, compute, storage, data protection—in a compact platform that is incredibly easy to manage,” says Channon. “The product’s built-in data protection capabilities, ease of implementation and operation, and tight vCenter integration were major differentiators. With SimpliVity we no longer have to rely on in-house server or storage experts for routine system admin and support tasks. Instead, a small team of IT generalists efficiently manages our entire global operation.”

SimpliVity Solution

SimpliVity OmniCube eliminates IT sprawl, cost and complexity by providing a scalable, modular, 2U building block of x86 resources that offers all the functionality of traditional IT infrastructure in a single device, with a unified administrative interface. At larger theme parks Merlin replaced three entire equipment racks of legacy gear with just two 2U OmniCube nodes. At smaller attractions a full equipment rack was consolidated into a single 2U OmniCube.



Merlin standardized on two remote site layouts: a single-node configuration for midway attractions and a multi-node configuration for theme parks. Each remote location is backed up to an OmniCube in a regional data center for disaster recovery. Site-to-site operational failover is supported for business continuity. The entire multinational implementation—which as of March 2016 includes 28 OmniCube nodes in six countries on four continents—is centrally managed from a UK operations center.

Benefits

SimpliVity hyperconverged infrastructure dramatically reduces CAPEX and OPEX, while ensuring high performance and availability for Merlin’s business-critical applications. With OmniCube, the company projects a three-year 25% TCO savings for its new theme parks and attractions, compared to alternative solutions.

The SimpliVity solution accelerates new installations by eliminating equipment, cabling and administrative complexity. “With OmniCube we can stand up IT infrastructure for a new site in a matter of hours,” says Channon. “Previously we spent days racking, stacking and configuring standalone servers, SANs and backup solutions.”

OmniCube’s native data protection features help safeguard IT services and applications. The product’s unique data efficiencies have slashed data backup and recovery windows from hours or days to minutes or seconds. “We have a 3TB file server in our California LEGOLAND property that used to take two full days to backup using EMC NetWorker,” explains Channon. “With SimpliVity we backup and restore that same server in under a minute. And when we had a problem with our contact center application we reverted to a known working version in just minutes with SimpliVity. With our previous environment it would have taken hours to recover the application, and the business would have lost ticket sales and hotel bookings in the process.”

Key Benefits include:

- Superior economics—25% three-year TCO savings compared to alternative solutions
- Simplified operations—IT generalists oversee entire deployment, freeing up specialists for innovation
- Dramatic infrastructure consolidation—three full equipment racks supplanted by two 2U nodes
- Improved availability for critical apps—zero SimpliVity downtime since inception
- Lower storage costs—up to 45:1 data efficiency
- Visibly improved application performance; 50% faster response time
- Best of both worlds: x86 cloud economics and enterprise capabilities including data efficiency, performance, data protection and global unified management

For more information, visit:

www.simplivity.com

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