

Gifu Prefecture Government Teleworking for Administrative Digitization Made Possible with Nutanix

Catered to the needs of more than 1,400 prefectural government telecommuting employees during COVID-19 pandemic

BENEFITS

- Realized cost-effective teleworking environment for all employees according to usage scenarios such as mobile work
- Catered promptly to the needs of more than 1,400 telecommuting employees
- Enabled secure and easy data sharing by Nutanix Files, eliminating approval process when using USB flash drives



“By procuring a platform which does not lock in vendors and breaking away from legacy architectures, we can eliminate the operational burden of SAN storage and reduce the operating cost. Furthermore, it is now possible to separate the renewal of hardware equipment and the software version upgrade.”

- ABE Shuji, Deputy Executive Director for IT promotion, General Affairs Department, Gifu Prefecture

CHALLENGES

Gifu Prefecture, which is located in the center of Japan, is an inland prefecture surrounded by seven prefectures, and the Hida region in the north is lined with mountains with an altitude of over 3000m, such as Mt. Ontake, Mt. Norikura, and Mt. Okuhotaka. In the southern Mino region, there is the middle basin of the Nagara River, which is selected as one of the “100 Best Waters in Japan”, and industries that make the most of nature are developing.

In Gifu Prefecture, the “Gifu Prefecture Public-Private Data Utilization Promotion Plan” was made in October 2019, and the “Gifu Prefecture Digital Transformation (DX) Promotion Strategy Council” was established in February 2021 to work on administrative digitization.

Triggered by the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, we accelerated the introduction of a teleworking environment as part of our work style reform and digital transformation (DX) infrastructure. It was necessary to create a comfortable working environment for the employees of Gifu Prefectural Government, to reduce the cost of the teleworking environment, and to create an IT infrastructure that could be used safely over the long term. To solve these issues, we decided to introduce the Nutanix Cloud Platform, which employs hyper-converged infrastructure (HCI) and distributed systems.

INDUSTRY

Local Government

CHALLENGES

- Started with a small scale teleworking environment and expand to all employees
- Increased need to telecommute in order to avoid 3Cs under the spread of COVID-19
- Legacy infrastructures require specialist skill sets to manage and expand storage
- Difficulty in promoting BCP measures

SOLUTION

Nutanix Cloud Platform

- Nutanix AOS
- Nutanix Prism
- Nutanix Files
- VMware Horizon View (Virtual Desktop System)
- NVIDIA vGPU (Virtual GPU) / NVIDIA Virtual PC (vPC)

Applications

- HR & Pay Slip System
- Financial Accounting System
- Microsoft Office 365
- Video Conferencing
- Chat Tools

ABE Shuji, Deputy Executive Director of Gifu Prefecture's General Affairs Department, who promotes Gifu Prefecture DX, explains the outline of the initiative as follows. "In order to realize the concept of enriching and making the lives of the people of Gifu Prefecture more secure and convenient through DX, the prefecture is promoting Gifu Prefecture DX, comprising the digitization of government, DX support for municipal governments, and DX in various fields. Among our DX initiatives in Gifu prefecture, we have services for our residents that provide the online application for administrative services and consultations using chatbots, as well as initiatives which solves issues in areas such as medical and nursing care, agriculture, and industries. In dealing with many of these issues, it is essential to introduce the teleworking and web conferencing infrastructure that supports flexible work styles for our employees. Therefore, we decided to introduce Nutanix Cloud Platform in order to create the telework environment that simplifies the construction and maintenance of ICT and BCP."

SOLUTION

Gifu Prefecture's intra-office network consists of "Three-Layer Separation" based on "Local Government Information Security Measures" presented by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC). Many of the employees in the prefectural office use the groupware and business systems provided mainly by the LGWAN connection system in these three layers. Mr. Abe mentioned, "The Gifu Prefectural Office has clarified the usage scenes such as at home and mobile work, and introduced three types of teleworking system. They are a virtual desktop (VDI) environment for standard users, a remote desktop environment utilizing a dedicated administrative network (LAGWAN), and a mobile environment with the functions limited to mail and scheduling. Thus, we have succeeded in providing a cost-effective teleworking environment for all employees."

The teleworking VDI environment built by the Gifu Prefectural Government prepares a server in an external data center and the telecommuting employees access it from a VDI terminal via a closed network. Since the external data center and LGWAN inside the prefectural office are connected by a closed network, a secure connection route is established. Nutanix Cloud Platform was introduced as an HCI and distributed system for this teleworking VDI environment. Regarding the background of choosing Nutanix Cloud Platform, Mr. Abe said, "We have been paying attention to Nutanix for a long time. In general, in the case of VDI using SAN and NAS, the choice of software depends a lot on the storage vendor. In addition, its operation requires specialized skills and storage expansion is difficult. In comparison, the distributed storage configured with Nutanix HCI does not create any vendor lock-in situation and would allow us to efficiently use the local disk on the server."

"Furthermore, the secure and easy data sharing by Nutanix Files was also attractive. In the past, when we implemented one of the largest virtualization infrastructure in Japan, we had a hard time with storage expansion by scaling out and implementing BCP measures. This is the reason why we wanted to adopt distributed storage that does not use SAN in Gifu Prefecture VDI environment", adds Mr. Abe.

CUSTOMER OUTCOMES

At Gifu Prefectural Government Telework, we were able to provide all of employees with a teleworking environment that compressed costs to about one-eighth by combining three types of access methods and utilizing smart devices other than PCs.

Regarding the effect of building a VDI environment on Nutanix Cloud Platform, Mr. Abe said, "The adoption of Nutanix HCI and distributed storage has made it possible to simplify the construction and maintenance of ICT and BCP. Also, by procuring a platform which does not lock in vendors and breaking away from legacy architectures, we can eliminate the operational burden of SAN storage and reduce the operating cost. Furthermore, it is now possible to separate the renewal of hardware equipment and the software version upgrade."

Also, regarding the effect of introducing Nutanix Files, "In the past, we used to exchange data between PCs using USB flash drives. Nutanix Files made it possible to exchange them over the network, which has reduced the amount of work required on site. In addition, it is no longer necessary to manage a physical device called a USB flash drives. As such, improvements have been made in terms of both operational and security measures." adds Mr. Abe.

NEXT STEPS

Regarding future initiatives, Mr. Abe said, "We will apply HCI and distributed storage to the Gifu Prefectural Common Infrastructure System (Gifu Prefecture's private cloud), which will make system operation more efficient. This will allow us to increase the flexibility of the system while maintaining robust security, and to improve cost performance.

There are many things that cannot be simply applied to the cloud, but we will systematically proceed to optimize the internal office system while assessing the issues one by one.

For example, in respect of BCP measures, we are considering a shift from data storage in an external remote location to storage in the Gifu Prefectural Government Building. The distributed storage allows us to increase the storage capacity as needed and flexibly expand the system without burden. By developing the infrastructure, we would like to work on DX promotion, such as future data collaboration with municipal governments, as well as sustainable growth of the prefecture."



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