

INSTANTIS GOES GREEN, SAVES GREEN WITH DELL

Dell servers and storage help Instantis FlexSaaS™ data center consolidate hardware by 40 percent while improving application performance and growth headroom 200 percent



SOLUTION
• CONSOLIDATION



CUSTOMER PROFILE

COUNTRY: United States

INDUSTRY: Technology

FOUNDED: 1999

WEB ADDRESS: www.instantis.com

CHALLENGES

Accommodate rapid customer growth that threatened to overwhelm the data center, deliver outstanding performance to support new software capabilities, ensure “five-nines” availability for enterprise customers around the globe, cut ongoing IT costs by refreshing the servers and storage systems that support the company’s on-demand/SaaS project portfolio management offerings, and reduce environmental footprint of data center operations through reduced energy consumption.

SOLUTION

Instantis selected 11th-generation Dell™ PowerEdge™ servers with Intel® Xeon® processors and Dell/EMC storage to enhance the scalability, performance, reliability, and density of its IT infrastructure.

BENEFITS

Get IT Faster

- Completed an entire data center server refresh in under two months

Run IT Better

- Improved request processing performance by more than 200 percent and throughput capacity by another 200 percent, delivering better application performance for customers

Grow IT Smarter

- Consolidated server environment by 40 percent, reducing power, cooling, and system management costs
- Expected to save more than 30 percent over three years, helping to attract and retain customers to the FlexSaaS offerings
- Accommodated rapid customer growth in an eco-friendly manner and prepared for new software capabilities

The Dell logo, consisting of the word "DELL" in a stylized, bold, sans-serif font, enclosed within a circular border.

For Instantis, the data center is at the heart of the business. A large and rapidly growing number of global corporations rely on the company's EnterpriseTrack™ project portfolio management software to help plan, execute, and track project and portfolio performance. Instantis offers EnterpriseTrack as a secure, Web-based software-as-a-service (SaaS) application that can be deployed at the customer's site or on demand through the Instantis hosting facility. It is built on the company's FlexSaaS platform, which provides a flexible pricing and deployment model. To ensure on-demand customers can access all the functionality of EnterpriseTrack software without downtime, Instantis requires a robust IT infrastructure that can deliver outstanding performance and the utmost reliability.

“WITH THE INTEL XEON PROCESSORS IN THE 11TH-GENERATION DELL POWEREDGE SERVERS, WE HAVE PLENTY OF PROCESSING PERFORMANCE, MEMORY BANDWIDTH, AND I/O CAPACITY FOR ALL THE NEW CAPABILITIES OF OUR ENTERPRISETRACK SOFTWARE.”

A. Prasad, founder and vice president of server engineering and technical operations, Instantis

Over the past few years, the company has added on-demand customers quickly while continuously expanding the capabilities of its software offerings. While those changes have been good for business, they have presented challenges for the IT department, which needed to scale compute performance and storage capacity within the data center's existing power and real estate constraints.

“Exponential customer growth and new application functionality forced us to expand our server and storage footprint considerably,” says A. Prasad, founder and vice president of server engineering and technical operations at Instantis. “As a result, we nearly maxed out the power and space in our data center. We needed to refresh our data center with a dense infrastructure that would let us accommodate new customers and roll out new software features without having to lease more data center space.”

While conserving space was essential, the IT group also needed servers and storage that could provide strong performance to support current and future application functionality. “Performance is key for us. Our infrastructure has to deliver consistent and exceptional application performance for our customers even as we add software features and functionality,” says Prasad. “We also have a very aggressive hardware upgrade schedule to keep up with constant software innovations. We need to work with a vendor that could help us migrate to the next generation of hardware quickly and easily.”

Because the infrastructure is central to the company's SaaS business, the hardware must be reliable and backed by strong support. “All in a single system, our customers use EnterpriseTrack to manage and report on a variety of enterprise-wide project portfolio initiatives, including IT, Six Sigma, CapEx, New Product Development,

HOW IT WORKS

HARDWARE

- 11th-generation Dell™ PowerEdge™ servers with Intel® Xeon® processors
- Dell/EMC storage

SOFTWARE

- Instantis EnterpriseTrack™

SERVICES

- Dell ProSupport

“THE INTEL XEON PROCESSORS IN THE 11TH-GENERATION DELL POWEREDGE SERVERS HAVE HELPED US TO IMPROVE PROCESSING PERFORMANCE BY MORE THAN 200 PERCENT....NOW OUR CUSTOMERS ENJOY FASTER APPLICATION PERFORMANCE WITH MUCH LESS LATENCY THAN EVER BEFORE.”

A. Prasad, founder and vice president of server engineering and technical operations, Instantis

Sustainability, and others. Those initiatives can stretch across numerous global business units and include thousands of projects that can ultimately result in millions of dollars in project benefits. Any downtime for EnterpriseTrack could jeopardize the success of those critical projects,” says Prasad. “We pride ourselves on delivering ‘five-nines’ availability and zero data loss, so we need the most robust and reliable hardware we can find. If and when components do fail, we need excellent support from our vendor to deliver that uptime to customers.”

DELL HELPS INSTANTIS REFRESH THE DATA CENTER IN JUST TWO MONTHS

After evaluating several other top-tier hardware vendors, the Instantis team chose to continue working with Dell. “We constantly evaluate hardware vendors to ensure that we are getting the best value for the total solution,” says Prasad. “For this particular refresh project, we analyzed various benchmark results and alternatives, and we found that the 11th-generation of Dell PowerEdge servers could deliver a stronger price/performance ratio than competing systems. Dell also offers one of the best reliability, serviceability, and scalability solutions for both servers and storage, and one of the best financing options through the Dell Financial Services.”

The Dell account team worked with Instantis to select the right hardware, helping to accelerate the data center refresh. “During our extensive performance and reliability certification efforts, the Dell team provided access to relevant technical resources that helped us greatly and

enabled us to meet our aggressive upgrade schedule,” says Prasad. “We completed the entire refresh in under two months.”

The Dell team also reduced the challenges of purchasing from multiple hardware and software vendors. “As a technology company, the acquisition of new products is a constant process that can take a lot of time and resources,” says Prasad. “Dell helps us simplify purchasing tremendously. In addition to hardware, we buy software licenses for databases, spam filters, and more. By working with Dell, we can consolidate our purchasing process and use just one financing scheme.”

Having access to the Dell technology road map will continue to help Instantis with future purchases. “Dell is a key technology partner for us,” says Prasad. “We can work with technical personnel at Dell to get in-depth information on current products, and we can learn about emerging technologies so we can better plan for the future.”

DELL PROVIDES THE FOUNDATION FOR SOFTWARE AS A SERVICE

Instantis selected Dell PowerEdge servers with Intel Xeon processors to maximize performance and processing density. “With the Intel Xeon processors in the 11th-generation Dell PowerEdge servers, we have plenty of processing performance, memory bandwidth, and I/O capacity for all the new capabilities of our EnterpriseTrack software,” says Prasad. “The multi-core architecture of the Intel Xeon processors also helps us to maintain a very dense, energy-efficient infrastructure.”

To provide scalable storage and excellent I/O performance for the Dell server environment, the IT group selected Dell/EMC storage. “Dell/EMC storage gives us the capacity we need for today and easy scalability for the future,” says Prasad. “In addition, the I/O performance of the Dell/EMC storage ensures excellent system response for our customers. That is especially important since EnterpriseTrack routinely does various analytical slicing-and-dicing calculations involving huge amount of data related to hundreds of thousands of enterprise projects.”

The Dell hardware provides the reliability that this SaaS company requires. “We have deep knowledge to fix problems if they come up, but the less time we can spend on those issues, the more time we have for innovation,” says Prasad. “Dell servers and storage provide a rock-solid platform for our application.”

INTEL XEON PROCESSORS HELP INCREASE PERFORMANCE

Instantis achieved a significant performance boost for its software with this refresh. “The Intel Xeon processors in the 11th-generation Dell PowerEdge servers have helped us improve processing performance by more than 200 percent within each rack-mounted server,” says Prasad. “Now our customers enjoy faster application performance with much less latency than ever before. Multiple business groups around the world can track projects and generate reports through the Web with less latency. We gained another 200 percent improvement in throughput capacity. Consequently, we can add new software capabilities without having to expand our data center.”

INSTANTIS REDUCES SERVER COUNT 40 PERCENT AND ENERGY CONSUMPTION ALMOST 50 PERCENT

Adopting Dell PowerEdge servers with powerful multi-core Intel Xeon processors also has helped the Instantis IT group to dramatically reduce the number of servers in its data center. “By fitting more processing power into each server, the Dell PowerEdge servers help us maintain a very dense infrastructure,” says Prasad. “We have reduced our server count by approximately 40 percent.”

That consolidation has enabled the company to reduce power consumption by almost half. “The Intel Xeon processors help keep power consumption and heat to a minimum,” says Prasad. “Even though we’ve boosted our data center performance and capacity, we’ve cut our power consumption by nearly half. We are cutting costs and minimizing the environmental impact of our data center.”

SERVER CONSOLIDATION AND DELL SUPPORT HELP INSTANTIS ENSURE UPTIME

Reducing the number of servers in the data center also has helped the Instantis IT group to accelerate problem resolution and simplify hardware management. “With fewer servers in our infrastructure, we have less hardware to troubleshoot when things go wrong. As a result of this project, we can continue to meet our goals for application availability. Our on-demand customers can rest assured that EnterpriseTrack will keep tracking projects and delivering reports around the clock,” says Prasad. “For us, a smaller infrastructure also means we can spend less time on hardware maintenance and management, and more time working to enhance our software.”

In the event of hardware problems, the IT group knows it can rely on Dell ProSupport for rapid replacement of parts. “Dell hardware is very reliable, but if a component fails, we can just call Dell for a replacement, and we will have what we

need within four hours,” says Prasad. “With Dell ProSupport, we know that small problems can be fixed quickly, before they turn into big ones.”

REFRESH PROJECT HELPS INSTANTIS SAVE 30 PERCENT OVER THREE YEARS

By reducing the number of servers and simplifying infrastructure management, the refresh project has helped Instantis cut acquisition and operation costs significantly. “The superior price/performance ratio of Dell servers means that we have been able to acquire much greater processing performance for our money than with competing hardware,” says Prasad. “And with fewer servers running, we’re also saving on power, cooling, real estate, and systems management—and that’s good for the environment. By refreshing our data center with the 11th-generation Dell PowerEdge servers and Dell/EMC storage, we expect to save more than 30 percent on total costs over three years.”

DELL HELPS PROVIDE INSTANTIS WITH ROOM TO GROW

With a smaller, more powerful IT infrastructure, Instantis is now prepared to continue its rapid customer growth and fast-paced software development. “By moving to the 11th-generation Dell PowerEdge servers, we have the performance, reliability, and headroom to support our fast-growing customer base. We can introduce more organizations to the benefits of EnterpriseTrack without having to lease more data center space,” says Prasad. “We also have a powerful platform that will support the addition of new capabilities and ongoing innovation in an environmentally responsible manner.”

For more information on this case study or to read additional case studies, go to DELL.COM/CaseStudies.



SIMPLIFY YOUR TOTAL SOLUTION AT DELL.COM/Simplify

August 2009. © 2009 Dell, Inc. Dell is a trademark of Dell Inc. Intel, the Intel logo, and Intel Xeon are registered trademarks of Intel Corporation or its subsidiaries in the United States and other countries. Other trademarks and trade names may be used in this document to refer to either the entities claiming the marks and names or their products. This case study is for informational purposes only. DELL MAKES NO WARRANTIES, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, IN THIS CASE STUDY. 10007939

