

NCC MEDIA

Dell EMC Isilon targets bullseye for cable TV and digital media ads



ESSENTIALS

Industry

Advertising sales and strategy

Organization Size

450 employees

Business Challenge

- Rapid data growth requiring advanced analytics
- Database silos make it difficult to aggregate data for analysis

Results

- Eliminated overnight data-import processes
- Accelerated responsiveness to customer requests
- Increased storage scalability enabled new markets to be targeted
- Streamlined customer decision-making with simplified analytics results

Solutions

- Dell EMC Isilon
- VMware vSphere
- Hortonworks Data Platform, Pivotal Greenplum, Microsoft SQL Server, PostgreSQL, NoSQL

Advanced analytics connect advertisers with consumers

Whether you're selling cars, offering landscaping services, or running for office, connecting the right message to the right people is essential. That's where targeted advertising placement helps enormously. And in the world of cable TV and digital media, nearly every regional and national advertiser in the U.S. comes to NCC Media.

NCC provides targeted strategies and media representation for leading advertisers, from major retailers to nonprofits and political campaigns. NCC shows customers where to run ads to ensure the most impact. This requires aggregation of hundreds of terabytes of data from sources like Nielsen ratings, Scarborough local market data, and, increasingly, voting and census data.

Historically, NCC stored data across a variety of disparate databases. This approach created information silos that were difficult and time-consuming to aggregate into useful market intelligence for customers.

To streamline data aggregation and deliver analytics that provide greater value and insights, NCC built an enterprise data lake on Dell EMC® Isilon® scale-out storage with Hortonworks Data Platform.

With an Isilon-powered data lake, NCC streamlined data aggregation from multiple sources to help customers target advertising with the highest impact and best value. By providing direct data integration with Hadoop, Isilon eliminated time-consuming overnight data importation processes. The easy expandability of Isilon also helped NCC take on growing data aggregation requirements for political campaigns and emerging media markets.

Environment

NCC deployed Dell EMC Isilon X-Series clusters in two data centers across the U.S. With native support of the Hadoop Distributed File System (HDFS) and Hortonworks Data Platform virtualized with VMware vSphere, Isilon is the foundation for the enterprise data lake. With multiprotocol support, Isilon ingests data from Microsoft SQL Server, Pivotal Greenplum, PostgreSQL, NoSQL databases, and external datamarts to provide a single point of data aggregation.



“Our goal is to say ‘yes’ to every customer request, and respond fast. Because data in the Isilon data lake is immediately available for HDFS analytics, we help our customers find their best targets more quickly.”

Seth Weingarten,
Vice President of Network Technologies,
NCC Media

In addition, NCC uses Dell EMC VNX® unified storage for general business applications. Combined, Isilon and VNX provide the company with 250 terabytes of raw data capacity. Dell EMC Avamar® software archives data to Dell EMC Data Domain®, which houses approximately seven petabytes of data.

Aggregates data without aggravation

With Isilon, NCC streamlined data aggregation and analytics. In the past, it required tedious, time-consuming overnight processes to import data from multiple databases. Now, Isilon provides direct data integration with Hadoop.

Seth Weingarten, NCC's Vice President of Network Technologies, reports, “We tested Isilon by downloading 1½ terabytes of census data for our analysts to query against. We didn't have to do anything in Hadoop; the data was downloaded directly on the Isilon cluster with no need to transform the format. As soon as the download was finished it was available for Hadoop. No one could believe how fast they could start querying the data and running their analytics.”

Pinpoints advertising targets faster

Weingarten notes that faster time to analytics enables NCC to respond faster to customers. “Our goal is to say ‘yes’ to every customer request, and respond fast. Because data in the Isilon data lake is immediately available for HDFS analytics, we help our customers find their best targets more quickly.”

For example, many advertisers think they always need top-tier networks. But through its extensive research and analytics, NCC can often show customers that targets on lower-tier networks provide the same or better impact.

“Because of our analytics capabilities with Hadoop and Isilon, we can show customers data that supports their goals in an easy-to-understand way,” Weingarten notes. “Data is our currency, so keeping it simple is how we inform customers of our recommended strategies. Without Isilon, I don't know how else we could do that. It would be more of a promise. Instead, Isilon allows us to rapidly provide clear proof.”

Virtually unlimited storage scalability

With rapid growth of market analysis in the political arena, scalability is especially important to NCC. By virtualizing Hortonworks Data Platform and having HDFS directly linked to Isilon, the company gains virtually unlimited storage scalability independent of its computing environment.

“By separating storage from compute, Isilon gives us better value than traditional Hadoop clusters,” says Weingarten. “We don't have to add an entire compute node when we need more storage. This keeps our costs down and gives us more agility to ingest as much data as we need to help customers make their advertising decisions. Political advertising is already a half-billion dollar business for us and the flexibility we get with Isilon is helping us grow it even more.”

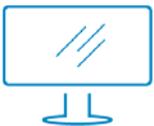
Company Overview

NCC Media is an advertising sales, marketing, and technology company that provides strategic planning, targeting, and advertising buying across cable and satellite networks, digital media, and interactive technologies in all domestic markets. With headquarters in New York City and 17 offices nationwide, NCC works on behalf of virtually all leading regional and national advertisers in the U.S.

Dell EMC: One step ahead of the market

As media viewership becomes more fragmented across digital devices with personalized programming, Weingarten expects data aggregation requirements to grow even further. For example, NCC will need to target ads to consumers who watch video on demand or stream content to their smartphones. As media markets become increasingly complex, advanced analytics will become even more important to NCC.

“To extend our advertising capabilities beyond traditional cable, we need a heavy analytics back-end that can automate much of the decision-making process for our customers,” says Weingarten. “I’ve always been able to count on Dell EMC for technology advancement. They always seem to be one step ahead of the market, and that gives me a lot of confidence as we look toward the transformation of media advertising.”



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