



Business challenge

As technology giants dominate the cloud services marketplace, providers are under pressure to drive down costs without compromising on service levels. How could Connectria carve itself a niche?

Transformation

Most cloud service providers promise ultra-high performance at low prices—but not all deliver. To make the promise a reality, Connectria uses IBM Storage and IBM Power Systems™ technology, which offer the reliable performance, simple management, and high resource utilization that enable consistently exceptional services at competitive prices.

Business benefits

100% uptime

supports clients' non-stop businesses

Upwards of 750,000 IOPS

offered to certain clients by IBM flash

TCO savings

boosts satisfaction of existing clients and helps attract new clients

Connectria

Connecting the dots to build a cloud services platform that delights clients every step of the way

Connectria provides award-winning cloud computing, managed hosting and customer hosting solutions for more than 1,000 customers in over 30 countries worldwide. As an expert in complex, multi-vendor solutions, the company supports a broad range of technologies, managed services, and security components. Established in 1996, Connectria is headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri, and has particular expertise in hosting and managing enterprise systems running on the IBM i and IBM® AIX® operating systems on the IBM Power platform.

“By capitalizing on the high resource utilization and easy management enabled by the IBM solutions, we can pass on TCO savings to our clients.”

—Dave Wiseman, VP Solutions Architecture, Connectria



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Meeting escalating expectations

As cloud services become more popular, the demand for high levels of performance at ever lower prices is growing. How can providers improve service levels while simultaneously cutting costs?

Dave Wiseman, VP Solutions Architecture at Connectria, responds: “When people hear cloud, they think high-performance services at very low cost. Couple that with the chance to switch IT costs from CAPEX to OPEX, and it’s no surprise that more companies are taking the plunge. But for the providers behind the scenes, the pressure is on to find new efficiencies that don’t degrade service quality.”

For Connectria, the answer lies in choosing the right technology that will meet customer expectations for performance while optimizing operational efficiency. Serving clients with varying needs, the company cannot afford to take a “one size fits all” approach.



“One of our most crucial technology decisions is around storage, since that dictates how quickly our clients can access their data,” explains Wiseman. “In recent years, we have successfully added multi-tenant cloud services based on IBM Power Systems to our offering, in addition to our existing managed services. We needed a storage infrastructure that could support both, as well as the demands of our most performance-sensitive customers, and without introducing too much complexity.”

Balancing price with performance

Connectria chose IBM Storage solutions for both its dedicated and multi-tenant cloud services environments, working with long-term collaborator and IBM Business Partner, Associated Computer Systems (ACS), throughout the selection and procurement processes. To provide shared cloud services, the company relies on IBM Storwize® V7000 storage connected to IBM Power System S822 and Power System S814 servers.

“For clients who need extreme performance and throughput, FlashSystem V9000 can offer upwards of 750,000 IOPS. So far, the clients using it are blown away by the performance and all we have had is positive feedback.”

—Dave Wiseman, VP Solutions Architecture, Connectria

Connectria also manages dedicated environments based on this combination of technology for some clients.

“ACS is a key vendor of ours, and its team has adapted to fit in with our way of doing business,” remarks Wiseman. “They always help us get to just the right solution, at the right price. Using Storwize V7000 to support our IBM Power Systems cloud makes perfect sense. It avoids the finger-pointing you risk when you choose multiple vendors; plus, we get reliable, cost-effective storage with built-in management tools.

“Storwize V7000 comes bundled with IBM Spectrum Virtualize™ software, which gives us enterprise-class virtualization capabilities, so we can drive up utilization of resources while maintaining simple management. IBM Easy Tier® automates the movement of data between drives according to how frequently it is accessed, ensuring the most vital data is stored on the fastest infrastructure. Features like these make our lives easier, and boost the user experience.”

For clients with dedicated environments that want extremely high levels of performance, Connectria rolled out the IBM FlashSystem® V9000, a virtualized all-flash storage system designed for enterprise environments.

“We were impressed when ACS demonstrated that FlashSystem V9000 could provide amazing speed at a much more competitive price than we were expecting,” says Wiseman. “We were given a demo box to play around with and connect to our systems, and we saw that FlashSystem delivers performance beyond what our most demanding clients need.”



Now, we have four V9000 systems in place to support dedicated client environments.”

Knowing all the answers

IBM solutions are helping Connectria surpass customer expectations for continuity of service, allowing the service provider to focus on its core and growing cloud business activities, confident its IT capabilities will be there whenever needed.

“Since deploying Storwize V7000 and the FlashSystem V9000, we have enjoyed 100 percent uptime,” comments Wiseman. “Our experience with IBM Power Systems solutions is that they are super-reliable, so it wasn’t a surprise to us that the IBM Storage solutions are too. It gives us great peace of mind to know that we have solid foundations for our cloud services, and it gives our clients confidence that they can depend on us to keep up with the pace of their businesses.”

“Since we do not know exactly how many SaaS clients we’ll get, Connectria’s IBM i Cloud allows us to grow as needed. If we need to size up, it’s just a phone call, implemented the next day and invisible to the customer.”

—Tom Fahey, President and CEO,
Health Care Software, Inc.

With the ability to fulfill demands for extremely high performance, Connectria can raise customer satisfaction levels and address new, unexplored parts of the marketplace.

“For clients who need extreme performance and throughput, FlashSystem V9000 can offer upwards of 750,000 IOPS,” says Wiseman. “FlashSystem means we virtually never have to say ‘no’ to clients’ requests—we rise to almost any challenge they throw at us. So far, the clients using it are blown away by the performance and all we have had

is positive feedback. With IBM flash storage in our toolbox, we have the headroom to handle incredibly performance-intensive workloads, opening up a potential new client base.”

Health Care Software, Inc. (HCS), a provider of mission critical, integrated solutions for the post-acute care market, is just one of Connectria’s many satisfied customers using Storwize V7000. Tom Fahey, President and CEO of HCS, remarks: “Since we do not know exactly how many SaaS clients we’ll get, Connectria’s IBM i Cloud allows us to grow as needed. If we need to size up, it’s just a phone call, implemented the next day and invisible to the customer.”

Connectria has also forged an alliance with information technology solutions provider Morton Technologies Group (MTG).

Tad Wharram, Partner at MTG, describes how working with Connectria helps the company reduce support calls from its customers: “One client has gone from placing 30 calls a month down to five, or even none in some cases. Once the environments are established and working for the dealers, it almost becomes hands-free for them. Connectria is doing all of the work in the background and they are dealing with fewer issues because Connectria is proactively finding all processes and automating up front.”

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—Dave Wiseman, VP Solutions Architecture, Connectria

Importantly, the low total cost of ownership (TCO) of the IBM solutions makes it possible for Connectria to provide differentiated cloud services at highly competitive prices.

Wiseman concludes: “By capitalizing on the high resource utilization and easy management enabled by the IBM solutions, we can pass on TCO savings to our clients. This helps us to compete in a very crowded industry. Best of all, backed up by IBM technology, we know we can always deliver on service.”

Solution components

- IBM® AIX®
- IBM FlashSystem® V9000
- IBM Power Systems™ S814
- IBM Power Systems S822
- IBM Spectrum Virtualize™
- IBM Storwize® V7000

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Take the next step

To learn more about IBM Storage, please contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following website:

ibm.com/storage

Associated Computer Systems (ACS) provides technology services that are tailored to its clients’ particular business needs. From security to connectivity, ACS has you covered. To learn more, visit: acsitd.com

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TSC03442-USEN-01

