Business challenge

Faced with a storage infrastructure that was nearing the end of its lifecycle, Evolution Systems Pty. Ltd. needed to update the technology supporting its private cloud offering.

Transformation

To accommodate the shifting storage demands of its cloud services customers, IBM Business Partner Evolution updated its data centers with IBM FlashSystem® 7200 technology, featuring the IBM® Storage Utility Offering. Now, the business can quickly and easily match its infrastructure to customer needs—all while boosting performance.

Daniel Fleetwood
Business Development Manager
Evolution Systems Pty. Ltd.

Results

~ 80% faster workloads
for some users compared to the previous platform

Simplifies capacity planning
while improving responsiveness to customer demands

4 – 6 minutes
for new storage, while the previous process could take 4 – 6 weeks

Evolution Systems Pty. Ltd.

All the storage needed … with a little extra

Founded in 2000, IBM Business Partner Evolution is a leading provider of IT solutions, specializing in cloud hosting and management services. The business is headquartered in Sydney, Australia, with its private cloud solution hosted in data centers across Australia.

"We have been able to eliminate the time-consuming procurement cycle when adding new capacity for our private cloud clients."

—Geoff Boreland, Managing Director, IBM Business Partner Evolution Systems Pty. Ltd.

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Big demands need big support

Growth, particularly for a business, is often exhilarating. Adding users, tapping into previously unreached customer pools, launching new offerings—the ability to move beyond the present is often the sign of a healthy business. But with each of these triumphs comes more work. More customer expectations. More data to manage. More bandwidth costs. Meaning growth can also lead to a number of headaches.

"We've seen substantial growth the past couple of years," explains Daniel Fleetwood, Business Development Manager for Evolution. "At present, we have 30-plus clients and over 4,000 individual users logging in to our private cloud solution every day. And we have software companies running their applications as a SaaS on our infrastructure."

"We often get requests for large amounts of storage—up to 100 terabytes at a time—at very short notice," adds Geoff Boreland, Managing Director at Evolution. "And we have to be able to deliver that as a scalable cloud solutions provider."

However, the existing equipment in Evolution's infrastructure struggled to keep pace with these demands. "We were coming to the end of a three-year maintenance cycle," recalls Fleetwood. "And the devices were nearing capacity. With each new customer or expansion for existing clients, we'd have to order new drives shipped to us, which would have taken weeks."

As a result, the business chose to update its storage architecture. "It was a no-brainer," continues Fleetwood. "We just looked at the total cost of ownership for buying new storage versus renewing the maintenance licenses every year and adding drives when we needed them."

The next generation

Having been an IBM Business Partner for almost 20 years, Evolution chose to deploy IBM Storage technology to create this new iteration of its cloud solution—the Gen 4 Private Cloud. "We're very familiar and confident with IBM," notes Fleetwood. "We've used them for storage in the past, and we're using IBM Power servers for our private cloud service, running them out of our Tier III and IV data centers across Australia."

At each of these locations, Evolution upgraded to a new IBM FlashSystem 7200 device, which each feature non-volatile memory express (NVMe) IBM FlashCore® Module storage. And to draw more value out of this

equipment, the business also took advantage of the IBM Storage Utility Offering, meaning that while the IBM FlashSystem devices offer several petabytes of capacity, Evolution only pays for the space that it uses.

"In the actual rack—in the 7200 itself—there's a lot more storage," adds Fleetwood. "But we only activate it when we need it. So we paid for a base amount of standard storage, and we only pay for more when we go beyond that."

From weeks to minutes

With the updated IBM Storage technology in place, Evolution can now deliver more responsive service to its customers, particularly those with sudden storage demands. "It's the latest, fastest storage we could buy," elaborates Fleetwood. "Additional capacity is instantly available for our private cloud subscribers. Before, if we were nearing capacity, we'd have to order new drives, wait for them to arrive and then install them in the data center."

"We have been able to eliminate the time-consuming procurement cycle when adding new capacity for our private cloud clients," adds Boreland. "What used to take us four to six weeks, we can now do in four to six minutes. That's all thanks to the IBM Storage Utility model." Designed to provide consistent availability, this additional storage also helps to simplify capacity planning efforts for the business—all while avoiding up-front capital expenses thanks to on-demand pricing.

In addition, switching to FlashCore Module NVMe drives yields a better user experience for the company's cloud services. "No one likes lag," notes Fleetwood. "With the IBM technology powering our Gen 4 Private Cloud, our clients have seen a clear boost in performance without having to pay any extra for their subscriptions. In some cases, users have seen 80% faster speeds for their critical workloads."

"One of our biggest clients," adds Boreland, "had a single overnight job that used to take almost four hours. And with the new storage, it now takes about 35 minutes."

Beyond the new equipment, the longtime relationship Evolution has forged with IBM also offers some key advantages. "There's a value in being with such a well-known brand," concludes Fleetwood. "Having a partner like IBM has opened up a lot of opportunities for us. We have built great relationships with IBM executives, and they've helped us to better define our product sets."

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Solution components
- IBM FlashSystem® 7200
- IBM® Storage Utility Offering

Take the next step
To learn more about the IBM Storage Utility offering or the other IBM solutions featured in this story, please contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner.

To learn more about its cloud-based services and what Evolution Systems Pvt. Ltd. can do for you, please visit: Evolution