



Search company Attivio finds both performance and capacity

Installs Infinio on their entire production environment, plans to do it again

CASE STUDY



ATTIVIO®

No other customer has been using Infinio longer than Attivio. The enterprise search company has installed Infinio across its entire IT environment and continues to expand the deployment because of Infinio's excellent performance results, operational transparency, and ease-of-use.

Attivio was Infinio's first beta customer, and the first to purchase Infinio Accelerator commercially. The results were impressive enough that Attivio deployed Infinio across their entire production environment.

And they didn't stop there. With a track record of success in the earlier production environment, Attivio has now built Infinio into its new, next-generation production environment.

Attivio's Active Intelligence Engine (AIE) is a "unified information access platform." Their customers depend on their enterprise-class software to quickly deliver comprehensive business insight across all their corporate information. Attivio runs the same type of environment as its customers, so they know how important performance is for business intelligence.

Attivio's current environment includes three vSphere clusters running on NetApp filers. One cluster has 13 hosts on two datastores. The other two clusters each have eight hosts on one datastore, for a total four datastores. There are more than 500 VMs running across all three clusters to support internal operations including development, build, and QA.

One feature that makes a big difference at Attivio is Infinio's operational transparency. "From an operational perspective—we don't do anything differently," says Sean Lutner, Director of IT Operations at Attivio. "Installation is super easy and super hands-off, which is not typical for enterprise software. I really appreciate Infinio's ease-of-use and the obvious impact it has on our environment."

COMPANY

Attivio

INDUSTRY

Advanced enterprise search

BENEFITS

- Improved storage performance with no added hardware
- Sustained read offload of 88%; 93% of bandwidth offloaded
- Sustained 5x performance improvement over 16 weeks
- Installed with no downtime or service interruption

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The results have been great, says Lutner. With Infinio, Attivio has been running its own product across the majority of internal VMs. They saw 88% of read requests offloaded from storage, and up to 93% of bandwidth saved. Response has improved as much as 6x, with a sustained 5x performance increase over 16 weeks.

Infinio's server-side cache also helps smooth out storage performance. For example, each night there are spikes as various builds kick off. Infinio reduces these spikes, easing the load on storage and making performance across the cluster more even.

As Infinio's oldest customer, Attivio has logged more miles on Infinio Accelerator than any other organization, and the experience has been very positive. "It does what says it's going to," says Lutner. "We've talked to support a few times, and they've been super helpful. And we've never had a single data problem with Infinio. Ever."

Attivio has been so impressed with Infinio that it has designed it into their new data center, now rolling out. "Our new initiatives are about automation and self-service," says Lutner. "We'll be rolling out an internal cloud, using VMware vCloud Suite, that will provide self service for everybody in the company." He also notes the cloud will enable Sales to easily set up and demonstrate proofs-of-concept for customers on their own.

For many organizations, Infinio's server-side caching lets them get better performance without buying more storage. Attivio took a different approach. "We didn't buy less storage," says Lutner, "We bought more." Instead of buying racks of SSDs to speed up the storage in its new data center, Attivio installed Infinio for the performance and invested the cost savings in additional capacity.

While alternative proposals the company considered did include SSD shelves, Attivio instead opted to use Infinio. "Why spend a lot of money on one isolated shelf of SSDs when you can get that benefit across the environment for less with Infinio?" says Lutner. "Infinio lowered the cost of our overall storage system," while improving its performance.

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"For the price, Infinio has a huge return," he notes. "It's way cheaper than any hardware solution we could go with." Lutner also likes the fact that Infinio "doesn't lock us into any one hardware vendor."

There have been some unexpected side benefits too. One anecdote Lutner recalls is from early in their Infinio deployment. An unknown process in the environment was hogging resources, doing more than 5000 IOPS of reads alone. The Infinio dashboard helped identify the busy host and made it easy to track down the guilty VM. It turns out a big test hadn't ended properly and was slamming the rest of the system. The errant process didn't affect overall storage performance because Infinio was offloading all the read requests.

As a search company Attivio knows the importance of speed for business intelligence. With Infinio, Attivio has found the performance it needs to support its current infrastructure, and for its future growth.

