

items GmbH

Quick View

Organisation:
items GmbH

Industry:
IT Service Provider

Application:
Electronic Document Archive

Integrator:
d.velop

Solution:
Plasmon UDO Technology and
d.velop D.3 Software

As a complete application service and document management solutions provider, items GmbH manages a wide variety of SAP, data storage and archiving projects for customers throughout northern Germany. With a growing number of client accounts and two existing MO (Magneto Optical) archives that reached their capacity limit, items decided to upgrade their systems to UDO. Implementing a Plasmon G-series library ensured that they could continue to benefit from the strengths of optical technology while offering more cost-effective services to their customers.

Customer Profile

Founded in 1999, items GmbH is one of Germany's most respected regional IT service providers, offering complete solutions to the utility industry. The success of the business has seen the company grow from 32 employees at a single site to 145 employees at 4 sites throughout northern Germany. At the same time, their product and service portfolio has expanded from SAP integration and hosting to a much wider range of consultancy, system and process services. By focusing on the utility industry, items has developed a very specialised product portfolio and established an excellent reputation for industry knowledge and high quality service.

The Problem

Since its formation in 1999, items had been using MO libraries to archive customer records. After years of dependable use and constantly increasing demand, the company was beginning to outgrow their available archive capacity. Faced with the need to migrate a new customer's large data set to their archive, items decided to re-evaluate their options. They needed a solution that would match the dependability of their old archive, but would allow them to scale their system capacity and offer new services.

items wanted to continue using optical storage, because the data longevity and record authenticity inherent in the technology was important to its customers, many of whom run their SAP systems through items. Additionally, the company wanted the flexibility to implement a low cost off-line archive strategy when required by their customers.

The Solution

Following a recommendation from their system supplier, items chose to implement one of Plasmon's Enterprise G-Series libraries. Their G164 provides them with almost 5TB of archive capacity using 30GB UDO media and can be field upgraded to over 19TB as their needs continue to grow.



One of Germany's most respected regional specialist IT service providers upgrades to a UDO G-Series library to offer cost-effective record archiving for SMEs.

“The properties of UDO are ideal for the archive services we offer our customers and the flexibility of the UDO solution has created new business opportunities.”

Stephan Hiller
Consultant
items GmbH

Due to its exceptional document management functionality and SAP archiving capabilities, items selected d.velop's d.3 software, which also provides direct support for Plasmon libraries. Having an expandable archive solution means that customers hosting their SAP system through items can also take advantage of the archive services. This provides a great opportunity for items to leverage their network infrastructure since both hosting services can share the same dedicated lines without additional cost.

Their UDO library has been configured so that multiple customers can share the archive capacity. This is achieved by dividing the library into a number of partitions that use groups of different UDO media. Each customer's data is physically separated from one another; something which is important to system security as well as to items as a service provider.

Mr Hiller, consultant at items GmbH, comments: "This feature of Plasmon's UDO library was of particular interest to items as it allowed us to consolidate our hardware and offer cost-effective archiving services not only to larger, but also to the small and medium-sized customers."

This strategy also allows items to take media sets off-line as records age and their archive fills. Providing customers with a new off-line service option reduces archive costs on older records while ensuring the data is still available for future access.

Within the first 10 months of deployment, approximately 1TB of data was archived to the G164 by a number of customers. The data profile is mostly unstructured records in a TIFF, JPEG or PDF format such as correspondence, invoices, technical documents, contracts, etc. In total, 250 users are currently connected to the library with as many as 50-60 requesting information at any point in

time. items expects these numbers to rise as new customers come on line and more archive data from the SAP systems is sent directly to the UDO library.

Using True Write Once UDO media, items customers can be confident that records have not been altered regardless of the retention period. In order to further protect their customer's records, each evening a duplicate copy is made of the data that has been added to the archive. This mirrored media is stored off-site in a fire-proof vault for disaster recovery purposes.

items chose to run their old MO libraries and the new UDO solution in parallel so they can migrate customer records from lower capacity MO to UDO over a period of a few months. Mr Hiller explains: "There is no need for us to rush the migration process. Because optical media is so stable, we have no concerns about the life of the older records. We can therefore progress the migration at our own pace without fear of media deterioration that could result in data loss."

Summary

items' decision to upgrade their archive environment to a Plasmon UDO library has provided them with the media life and record authenticity required by their customers and also enabled them to offer a wider range of services. The scalability and economics of the new archive means that they can offer services to their traditional SME customers, as well as, larger organizations.

items' Enterprise G-Series UDO library can grow with their archive and will also allow them to take advantage of next generation, higher capacity UDO media. Delivering the reliability of their old optical system with capacity for the future, items' new UDO library is meeting their expectations and the needs of their customers.

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