EMC IT DEPLOYS SYNCPLICITY WITH PRIVATE CLOUD STORAGE

Users Love It; EMC IT Trusts It

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Challenge

- Simplify collaboration on files for mobile employees
- Protect intellectual property and other sensitive information
- Scale to tens of thousands of global employees

Solution

- Deployed Syncplicity with EMC private cloud storage

Results

- Enabled global workforce to securely access and share files from any EMC-managed device
- Provisioned 36,000 users in three months
- Improved data security

IT PROVEN

CUSTOMER PROFILE

CHALLENGE: SIMPLIFY COLLABORATION WITH SECURE WAY TO SYNC AND SHARE FILES

EMC's 60,000 global employees needed a better way to sync and share content ranging from presentations and spreadsheets to contracts and marketing videos. "Employees share files with people inside and outside EMC throughout the day," says Wissam Halabi, Distinguished Engineer and Chief Infrastructure Architect for EMC IT.

Traditional ways to share files, such as sending email attachments and FTP, no longer meet EMC's needs, for three reasons. First, many employees have three to five company-managed devices, often a laptop, tablet, and smartphone. "Mobile users expect to be able to access their files from anywhere, anytime, on any device," Halabi says.

Second, employees need a convenient way to securely share content with customers and partners. They can't email large presentations or video files, for example, because of Outlook file-size limits. To get around attachment size limits, more than 10,000 EMC employees had started using consumer cloud services. Odds were high that some employees were storing sensitive or regulated files. "It's our job in IT to protect EMC intellectual property and other sensitive information, and we were worried about data leakage," Halabi says. "If employees want to store content in the cloud, we want it to be in our private cloud so we can keep it secure."

Third, globally distributed teams need an efficient way to collaborate on files. File shares and EMC eRoom work well for certain types of internal collaboration. But for teams that develop content, repeatedly uploading and downloading edited files is tedious.

To meet these needs, EMC IT wanted to provide a sync-and-share service with enterprise-grade security and manageability. "We knew that our service had to be as inviting to use as consumer-grade services, or else nobody would use it," says Gaurav Verma, Head of Customer Success for Syncplicity.

SOLUTION: SYNCPLICITY CLOUD WITH ON-PREMISES STORAGE

EMC IT now delivers a secure service for enterprise-grade online file sharing and mobile collaboration, using the Syncplicity cloud with on-premises storage. EMC employees use the service to access and share their files from anywhere, anytime, from any EMC-managed device.

"In today's global, mobile, and social world, we are on a collision course between the technology experience we have in our personal and professional lives," says Vic Bhagat, Chief Information Officer for EMC. "Syncplicity straddles both worlds, giving our employees the consistent, convenient experience they need to be productive whether they are in the office or on the go."

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Syncplicity works with standards-based storage systems from EMC and other vendors. EMC IT decided to use Atmos storage for teams that need disaster recovery capabilities, and Isilon storage for teams that need access to home directories and file shares. Total storage to-date is 3TB. "We can protect the data because it's all in our own data centers," Halabi says.

Before deploying Syncplicity, EMC IT worked with the product developers to make sure the service met the company's stringent security requirements. "Consumer cloud sharing services don't meet our requirements because employees lose control of who views a file after they email a link or embed it in a website," says Ian Fitzgerald, Senior Manager of Cloud Services for EMC IT.

With Syncplicity, EMC IT applies security controls to users, files, folders, and devices. For example, employees who share a link can set it to expire after a few days. They can restrict viewing to colleagues who have a Syncplicity account. They can also require a password, which is sent separately to the recipient. EMC IT doesn't want employees sending easily guessed passwords, like '12345678,' so employees just click a button and Syncplicity generates a random, complex password.

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Another security feature is that administrators can only sign in from the EMC network, and need a complex password. To restore files, administrators also need the employee's password and must use an EMC-issued device.

"Ironically, sometimes the best way to secure a process is to not lock it down, but allow it to happen with the proper controls and IT reporting in place," says David Martin, Vice President and Chief Security Officer for EMC. "The ability to set granular policy controls and gain visibility into file sharing while providing a delightful experience is the only way IT can 'manage the unmanageable.'"

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Simple user experience, simple support

When new employees join EMC, they receive a mailbox and a Syncplicity account with 7GB of storage. If they need more, they can visit the company's self-service catalogue to request up to 50GB. New users just download the Syncplicity app for their iPhone, iPad, Android device, or Windows or Mac laptop.

To make sure the support model could scale to tens of thousands of users, EMC IT decided to use community-based support. Employees can find answers to most of their questions on EMC|ONE, the company's online community platform. They can also post questions, which moderators from EMC IT answer. "The Syncplicity support community receives thousands of unique visits each month, offloading our helpdesk," says Fitzgerald.

EMC IT administrators use a dashboard to troubleshoot and generate high-level and granular reports about storage consumption, user adoption, and registered devices.

RESULTS
Rapid adoption, ease of scaling

In just three months, EMC IT provisioned more than 36,000 employees in offices around the world. The global deployment continues, and adoption is increasing steadily. Within the first 90 days, the number of users who sync and share daily quadruped—from 3,000 to more than 12,000. Currently EMC IT is migrating the 10,000 employees who use the Syncplicity public cloud to the on-premises hosted solution.

"The beauty of private cloud storage is that we can easily add or remove Syncplicity virtual machines as business needs change," says Fitzgerald. "For example, we can add temporary virtual machines to prepare for quarter-end activities and then shut them down afterwards."

Protection of intellectual property

EMC IT now has control over all of the unstructured content that previously was stored in unmanaged locations such as email inboxes, local desktop folders, and consumer cloud services.

"Every file that employees share with Syncplicity and on-premises storage is one less file that would have gone into a consumer sync-and-share cloud service," Fitzgerald says. "We've reduced the risk of leaking intellectual property or other confidential information."

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High user satisfaction: 86% would recommend Syncplicity

In a 2014 user satisfaction survey administered by EMC IT, almost nine in ten respondents said they would recommend Syncplicity to a coworker. "The common theme was that Syncplicity increases productivity and improves communications and file sharing within teams," says Karen Griffin, EMC IT Consultant Product Manager. One user said, "Rather than having to find an FTP site or shared folder or download some type of drive, I just use Syncplicity. I know anyone I share with will be able to access the files." Another survey respondent told how he had used Syncplicity for the first time to send a 62MB file to six people and keep track of master copy—something he couldn't have done with any other tool.

In some departments, the ease of sharing large files has transformed business processes. "To edit marketing videos, we used to have to put people on planes to transport hard drives," says Jonathan Martin, Senior Vice President of Corporate Marketing for EMC. "Now, with Syncplicity, we can upload large video files in minutes and send the link to the editor. We're more agile, and we're also saving thousands of dollars annually in travel time and costs."

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Increased productivity through simpler collaboration

A simpler way to collaborate also saves time during everyday work processes. "People on my team have stopped sending Excel attachments that I have to hunt for later," Verma says. "They just send me the link. And if my manager asks for a presentation when I'm at the airport, I don't have to look for it. I just use the Syncplicity app on my iPhone to share the folder."

Employees save more time by not having to painstakingly consolidate document review comments from multiple email attachments. And they like the fact that Syncplicity for iPad displays the employee's active files and folders front and center. The app also provides notifications such as, "It has been one day and Karen Griffin has not downloaded ProjectPlan.doc. Would you like to send a reminder?"

Halabi concludes, "Now we can access and share files and folders from anywhere, anytime, on any device. With Syncplicity, collaboration is as easy as it is with any tool."
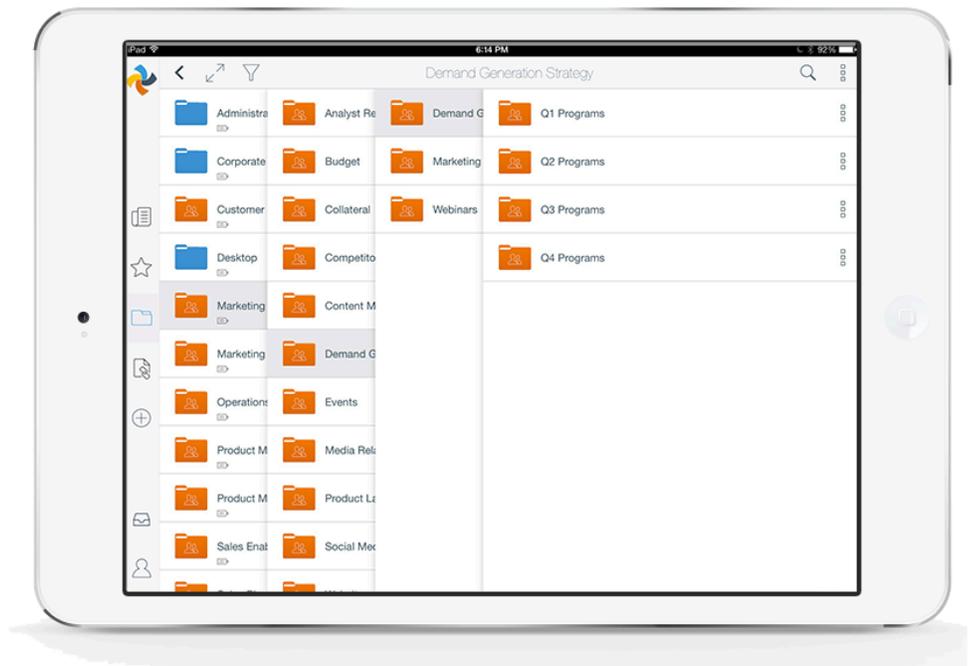
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