

The Italian State Finance Ministry (DPS) Finds the Most Economical Solution with IBM

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*Ruggero Dessi, IT Innovative Solutions Specialist,
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The Challenge

Refresh distributed IT infrastructure, to provide better performance with reduced management overhead; achieve low cost of ownership without sacrificing reliability

The Solution

Implemented IBM BladeCenter servers, with IBM xSeries models 445 and 345, and a SAN built around IBM TotalStorage FASTT600 Storage Server [now DS4300]

The Benefits

Improved performance for key statistical applications; fast response times for 700 users; reduced requirements for off-site travel by technical staff; highly scalable and reliable infrastructure from single vendor

The Italian Ministry for Economics and Finance (Ministero dell'Economia e delle Finanze, MEF, www.tesoro.it) plays a key role in defining and managing national fiscal policy. The mission of the Department of Development Policies (Dipartimento per le Politiche di Sviluppo, DPS, www.dps.tesoro.it), the 3rd department of MEF, is to plan and oversee economic development in disadvantaged regions of Italy, investing public money in a variety of projects designed to stimulate growth and generate local wealth.

The IT department at the DPS (SINIT, Sistema Informativo per gli Investimenti Territoriali) not only supports internal users, but also provides and maintains links with external partners, notably the regional administrative bodies. These external parties require stable and highly secure access to investment fund databases run by the DPS, which also provides statistical tools to enable development projects to be monitored and controlled. In order to keep these vital services available to both internal and external users, the Ministry needs a highly reliable IT infrastructure, as Ruggero Dessi, IT Innovative Solutions Specialist, explains:

"Any regional authority in Italy can connect to our systems at any time of the day or night, so our infrastructure needs to support true 24/7 operations."

Taking a knife to costs

The DPS needed to refresh its three-year-old IT infrastructure, partly to meet growing performance demands from its 700 internal users, and partly to reduce administration costs. A personnel re-alignment had cut the resources available to the IT department (SINIT), so Ruggero Dessi needed to support the same systems and users with fewer technicians.



He says, "The DPS have a data centre and three other offices in Rome. With our previous IT infrastructure, we were required to send out technicians to deal with any problems in the remote locations. Realizing that this would no longer be easy, we looked at ways of centralizing system control and management, in order to cut costs and reduce the need for employees to travel off-site."

To meet its requirements for enhanced performance and ease of management, the DPS invested in IBM BladeCenter blade servers, replacing a large number of stand-alone servers. A total of five BladeCenter chassis were installed across three different locations, with another planned for application development. Says Ruggero Dessi, "BladeCenter has enabled us to reduce our server footprint and simplify the management of our Windows systems. Communication between the blade servers in each chassis is very fast and highly secure, and it is now much quicker and simpler to configure new servers."

Accounting for the benefits

To boost the performance of its statistics applications, the DPS installed two IBM xSeries 445 servers, each with

eight Intel® Xeon® processors. A further two x445 servers have been installed to support other business applications in virtualized environments. The Ministry also deployed six xSeries 345 servers for domain control and proxy services. “The x445 servers deliver incredible performance,” says Ruggero Dessi, “and our users are very satisfied with the fast response times.”

The storage infrastructure has also been consolidated to IBM technology, with the introduction of a storage area network (SAN) based around an IBM TotalStorage FASTT600 Storage Server [now branded as DS4300] with 6TB capacity.



The DPS uses IBM Tivoli Storage Manager software to control and automate backup and restore functions, and Ruggero Dessi reports that the SAN is already delivering business benefits. He says, “The IBM SAN is a new solution for us, but we can already clearly see the advantages. It is easy to control and to expand, and the cost-efficiency is much better than with our former solution.”

He concludes, “IBM has provided an infrastructure that is easy to manage remotely and very reliable – we are extremely satisfied with the solution.”

Source: <http://www-306.ibm.com/software/success/cssdb.nsf/CS/DNSD-69UNYX?OpenDocument&Site=eserverxseries>

Datatrend TrendSetter eNewsletter
April 15, 2005