CASE STUDY: HÄFELE

BACKGROUND

Häfele is a company with almost 100 years of experience. It specializes in selling furniture fittings and architectural hardware around the world. They have clients from all time zones, over 150 countries in total. The company's HQ is located in Nagold, Germany; it has 38 subsidiaries, 10 foreign sales offices, and 8100 employees worldwide.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Häfele runs a global business, with an online shop, which must stay open 24/7, 365 days a year, worldwide. A reliable online presence here also directly implicates customer satisfaction. Even a small pause in their operations can cause financial losses and customer dissatisfaction.

To make matters worse, the COVID 19 situation is also putting a strain on any business online operations, as their customers stay online longer, which puts unprecedented pressure on their online shop. It became more and more clear that a stable and fast running high-availability solution was needed - one that can provide nearly real-time data transfer while managing an extensive SSD collection.

The database replication is reduced from 8 hours to 3 hours. With the new environment, Häfele is also increasing its website and its online shop's response time.

SOLUTION

In the case of Häfele, and like many other businesses, high Availability is a crucial requirement. After a long deliberation from their side, the company's management team was unanimous that DRBD is the solution for their particular problem. By using DRBD, Häfele takes full advantage of its Linux environment and the high number of Linux containers (LXC). DRBD allows them to manage their SSD collection with the fastest possible speeds.

According to Thomas Riebe, Head of Digital Commerce Solutions, "The only alternative for us was setting up hardware with fiber channels, but the speed proved to be insufficient."

They also report having a reduction in downtime and a further improvement in high availability - especially in difficult cases when maintenance in one of the clusters is underway. In such scenarios, Häfele can quickly move the primary database to a different server altogether.

If we did not mirror the data with DRBD to a different server, our complete data would be lost. At the beginning of 2020 (Valentine's Day), we had a significant outage of the SSDs. We found out that after 40.000 working hours, the SSDs are in a state that they can't be repaired, or somehow the data can be rescued. Only transmitting the data to a different SSD collection saved us, so that we were able to be online again after just four hours of downtime.

THOMAS RIEBE
Head of Digital Commerce Solutions