



Success Story

Software Defined Storage

University of Erfurt

To enable students, academics and the public to access its rich library of books, journals and manuscripts, the University of Erfurt embarked on an initiative to digitise its collection and make it available online. To deliver a robust, secure and scalable platform to store and protect large volumes of data, SUSE and Fujitsu were selected through a tender process to deploy a cost-effective software-defined storage solution, powered by SUSE Enterprise Storage.



Overview

Established in 1379, closed in 1816, and re-established in 1994, the University of Erfurt is one of Germany's leading academic institutions. With four faculties, the Max-Weber-Kolleg and other scientific institutes, the university employs more than 670 academic and non-academic staff and serves a student body of around 6,000 people.

Challenge

Universities are curators of vast amounts of information. To empower students, researchers and the general public to access this information more easily, many future-facing institutions are now digitising their collections of books, journals and manuscripts.

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TOBIAS WELLER

Data Center Administrator
University of Erfurt

Creating, storing and making these digital records available to a wide range of stakeholders presents a range of challenges. As well as storing, managing and backing up a large volume of data, universities need the ability to scale out their infrastructure efficiently as their digitisation projects gather pace. Crucially, universities must achieve these goals within lean IT budgets.

In partnership with the Technical University of Ilmenau and Friedrich Schiller University Jena, the University of Erfurt aimed to make 500 databases, 9,000 online journals and digital publications, and the Bibliotheca Amploniana manuscript collection accessible to the public.

Tobias Weller, Data Center Administrator at the University of Erfurt, explained: “The university has a strong reputation in the humanities, and our library includes a variety of unique materials. As well as making it easier for everyone to engage with our collection, one of the key aims of the digitisation project is to protect our library for posterity by storing copies of our documents in a long-term archive.”



University of Erfurt at a Glance:

One of Germany's newest further education institutions, the University of Erfurt was founded in 1994 and today serves a population of 6,000 students.

■ Industry and Location

Education, Erfurt, Germany

■ Product and Services

SUSE Enterprise Storage

■ Results

- + Enables simple, cost-effective scalability, reducing up-front investments
- + Self-managing and self-healing capabilities reduce manual work
- + Offers a single point of contact for support, for rapid response and resolution

“Because SUSE Enterprise Storage is self-managing and self-healing, there is very little in the way of manual work for IT team.”

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To ensure the success of the initiative, the University of Erfurt launched an open tender to find reliable, security-conscious partners to deliver an effective, cost-efficient storage solution.

Solution

After evaluating offerings from several vendors, the University of Erfurt decided to deploy a software-defined storage platform based on SUSE Enterprise Storage and Fujitsu Server PRIMERGY and PRIMEFLEX disk systems.

“We were impressed by the high level of expertise, experience and support that the Fujitsu and SUSE teams offered,” recalled Tobias Weller. “SUSE Enterprise Storage gives us the ability to manage our storage infrastructure in a simple, agile way. Crucially, the Ceph technology at the heart of the SUSE platform means we can scale out seamlessly—all we need to do is slot in additional disks.”

Working together with a team from SUSE and Fujitsu, the University of Erfurt deployed its SUSE Enterprise Storage solution on time and within budget.

“One of the things that we appreciate most about the SUSE and Fujitsu solution is how easy it is to manage,” added Tobias Weller. “Because SUSE Enterprise Storage is self-managing and self-healing, there is very little in the way of manual work for IT team. If we do need support, the close partnership between Fujitsu and SUSE means that we have a single point of contact for all our questions. We simply call Fujitsu, and they diagnose the issue and work with SUSE on our behalf to provide a solution.”

Results

With SUSE and Fujitsu solutions underpinning its digitisation initiative, the University of Erfurt and its partners are achieving their objective of making its collection available to students, researchers and the wider public.

“Our long-term archive, built on SUSE Enterprise Storage, enables us to deliver information to researchers and students in an innovative way,” said Tobias Weller. “The Ceph technology that drives the solution means we can scale out in line with our data growth without breaking

the bank—a crucial capability for a lean IT department such as ours.”

Tobias Weller concluded: “Throughout our deployment and beyond, Fujitsu and SUSE have provided the support we need to achieve our goals, and the two companies’ commitment to the open source movement is closely aligned with our own strategy. By making our library available to everyone, we’re living up to our reputation as a modern university—and our Fujitsu and SUSE solutions are what makes it all possible.”