

Media Release

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Growing University Upgrades its Data Storage Capabilities

Liberty University turns to a New Storage Area Network

Lynchburg, Va. – Without a doubt, Liberty University is enjoying high enrollment growth. With the projected enrollments of 11,300 resident students and 39,000 distance learners, Liberty is now one of the largest evangelical Christian universities in the world.

An increase in student population means additional faculty and staff, and in an age where the amount of digital information worldwide is increasing more and more rapidly, those populations represent more information than ever. At Liberty, most of that information will be stored in files and end up, in one form or another, on the university's shared information storage media called the *Storage Area Network* or *SAN*.

Because of similar student growth in previous years, the SAN which is managed by the Information Services division of the university had almost become completely full by the end of 2007. Critical services, like the university's online learning management system and student self service portal were starting to be negatively affected. Something needed to be done and with an already capped size of 90 terabytes (TB) of information, it would have to be both fast and large scale.

Realizing the need, Liberty University began to review the offerings of six different SAN vendors. By the end of 2007, Information Services selected Network Appliance (NetApp) as the vendor of choice for its new SAN solution. A detailed analysis showed NetApp's SAN to be best in breed and have features that include scalability, cutting edge de-duplication technology, management features, snapshot capabilities, and a comparable overall cost.

"The de-duplication part of this implementation has already shown gains in the neighborhood of **20 percent of our current storage.**" says Connie Allison, Information Technology Director of Operations, "In plain English, that means huge financial savings for just doing business smarter."

To date, the 20% savings realized from de-duplication technology has allowed the university to save \$190,000 worth of disk space that it couldn't have otherwise. The savings will continue to grow throughout the life of the product and based on current trends will approach \$1.25 Million. Allison added, "the digital storage needs of a university that is growing at the rate Liberty is, are enormous. We've attempted to not only increase the amount of storage available to our campus but also to use it more efficiently."

The new SAN allows cost-effective growth from its current 150TB to over 600TB. Another key benefit of the new SAN is that all critical systems data will be mirrored, which means that there are multiple copies of the data kept in separate data centers. Should one data center fail, critical systems can continue to operate by using the data in the other data center. This means not only can more data can be stored on Liberty's SAN, but it will be more capable of withstanding equipment failure or natural disaster.

New SAN projects have also recently been implemented at other universities, including University of Florida, University of New Hampshire, Salisbury University, and University of Missouri. For more information about Liberty's experience, please contact Nick VanWingerden at 1 (434) 592-3873.