



Case Study: Foran Glennon

Global Law Firm Relies on Nasuni for Global File Infrastructure

Foran Glennon was founded in 2001 with two offices. Since then, the firm has expanded to eight locations, including major offices in Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, and London, through which it offers specialized legal representation and consulting services to businesses, healthcare and government organizations, insurance companies, multinationals, and individuals in a wide range of professions.

The firm prides itself on its communication with clients and believes in ongoing communication to keep them informed on every development. It uses advanced technology like Nasuni not only for research and communication, but also to extend its geographic reach throughout the United States and globally.

Business and IT Challenges

Unpredictable File Growth

In the legal industry, it is difficult to anticipate storage needs. Clients come in at different times, and, depending on the type of case, can generate varying amounts of unstructured file data that must be stored, protected, and managed.

Explains Jeffrey Keel, IT Manager at Foran Glennon, “We’re bringing in new cases all the time. The amount of data coming in through e-discovery is getting larger and larger, so we needed a solution that would enable us scale capacity rapidly, without having to procure, rack, and configure hardware.”

No Tolerance for Downtime

Attorneys need files to be highly available. Their ability to deliver topnotch client service and optimize billable hours depend on it. Expanding capacity using traditional NAS or file

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Summary

Industry: Legal

Global File System: Nasuni

Object Storage: Microsoft Azure

Sites: 8

Use Cases: File Server Consolidation; Global File Collaboration; Cost-Effective Archiving

Benefits: Unlimited Capacity On-Demand; 5-Minute RPO and RTO; Fast File Synchronization; 15-Minute Disaster Recovery, 50% Cost Reduction

servers would require constantly provisioning new hardware, resulting in unacceptable downtime.

This intolerance for downtime also makes data protection a priority. Foran Glennon's files need to remain protected and available to the firm's attorneys even in the event of a power outage, storm or natural disaster. Traditional file storage would require costly disaster recovery sites in multiple locations.

Slow Cross-Office File Transfer

One of the advantages of a global law firm is its ability to serve clients by tapping the collective expertise of its attorneys around the world, each of whom brings different fields of specialty and case experience to the table. Foran Glennon found this to be a challenge when its attorneys in the UK began trying to collaborate regularly with attorneys in its other offices.

Comments Donna Halac, Manager, Information Technology at Foran Glennon, "Due to the nature of the work that we do here, when users request data, they want it now. Sometimes they want it yesterday. Transferring file changes quickly and securely between London, Chicago, Los Angeles, and our other locations was not nearly as fast as sharing files locally within an office. We needed a way to address this."

High Archive Costs and Slow Retrieval Times

For compliance reasons, and to provide a referenceable case history that can be called upon should similar cases arise in the future, Foran Glennon needed a way to cost-effectively store older cases for many years. However, the firm didn't want to incur the high costs of media and off-site storage, nor did attorneys want to have to wait days or weeks to retrieve files if they were needed.

Solution

Foran Glennon needed a modern, progressive file infrastructure that could keep pace with its fast-moving, growing business. Nasuni Enterprise Cloud Services, backed by Microsoft Azure cloud storage, was the firm's choice. The switchover from legacy file storage was simple – the firm moved three offices to Nasuni and Azure in one night, and today all eight locations depend on Nasuni.

Says Halac, "We store our primary case files, our e-discovery documents, and anything else we cannot afford to lose in Nasuni."

Foran Glennon deployed Nasuni and Azure in a hybrid cloud configuration. The Nasuni UniFS® global file system stores all files and metadata in limitless Azure object storage as the authoritative record, then caches the actively used files on Nasuni Edge Appliances located in each office for high performance file access at local LAN speeds.

When a case closes and the case files become inactive, they automatically leave the Nasuni Edge Appliances, existing only in Azure cloud storage as a natural archive.

Results

Unlimited Capacity On-Demand

Nasuni UniFS securely links cached file storage in each office to the unlimited capacity of Azure cloud storage. Nasuni Edge Appliances store just enough of Nasuni UniFS to give users in each office fast, local access to active files and metadata. As files are added or changed, they are compressed, deduplicated, and encrypted, then sent to Microsoft Azure. Since capacity scales in the cloud and each appliance on-premises caches only the subset of data that is active, a given location can never outgrow its local edge appliance storage.

High Performance File Collaboration Across Offices

Now, when an attorney edits a file, Nasuni quickly propagates the changes to the Azure-based gold copy of that file. The changes are, in turn, propagated from cloud storage to all other Nasuni Edge Appliances in other offices, enabling all of the firm's attorneys with the proper permissions to access the latest version of every file at the speed of each office's local LAN.

Nasuni [Global File Locking](#) eliminates editing conflicts by ensuring only one user across the firm can edit a file at a time.

Says Halac, "The benefit is simple – with Nasuni, our users can share data much faster.

Advanced Data Protection and Fast Disaster Recovery

With its continuously versioning file system, Nasuni Enterprise Cloud Services takes frequent snapshots of files as they change on each Edge Appliance and transmits just the deltas to Azure cloud storage. Each change is time-stamped and saved, creating an infinite version history of every file. Not only has this eliminated the need for traditional file backup, but it has greatly improved recovery point objectives (RPO), enabling Foran Glennon to revert back to any previous version.

Says Keel, "Here's a good example. On a Friday at 4:50 PM, a user reported a file had been accidentally deleted. This wasn't the sort of thing that could wait until Monday, as the file needed to be submitted to a client by close of business that day. In the past, it might have taken an entire day to restore that file. I just opened up the Nasuni Management Console, found the previous in a few minutes, and restored it to its original location. Our user was able to get that submission to our client before 5 PM."

When combined with Azure geo-replicated cloud storage, Nasuni also gives Foran Glennon fast, affordable disaster recovery, without the cost and complexity of dedicated DR sites or co-location facilities.

"With Nasuni, we're able to scale capacity instantly, which means we can react to unpredictable case loads. We're able to provide primary and archive file storage, DR, backup, and collaboration, all in one solution. That inspires confidence in the IT department, making our lives easier everyday."

Donna Halac
Manager, Information
Technology, Foran Glennon



Says Keel, “In a law firm, you have to make sure you’re ready for a disaster. With Nasuni, if an office were to go offline, IT can re-establish access to that location’s files in about 15 minutes just by spinning up another edge appliance in the cloud or at another nearby office. All we need is power and Azure connectivity for our attorneys to get back to work.”

Fast Setup and Integration of New Offices

In the legal industry, mergers and acquisitions happen frequently, and new offices can be opened on short notice to serve the needs of new clients. IT doesn’t always get a lot of advance warning, yet files are expected to be instantly available to the new office. Nasuni enables the firm to quickly integrate and provision new locations without having to worry about buying new file storage, WAN optimization, and backup licenses.

Explains Halac, “It’s an hour max to get Nasuni up and running. We basically follow the same procedure we would for DR, except we have to do a little planning to make sure the appliance is right-sized with just enough storage to cache the active files and metadata for that office.”

Next Steps

While the success of the joint Nasuni-Azure solution has made IT’s job easier and brought clear benefits to the business at large, it has also made the IT department look better in the eyes of the attorneys, inspiring confidence in the team’s abilities with the firm’s most influential end users.

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Foran Glennon now has the charter to investigate other cloud solutions that can help improve client service and reduce internal costs.

About Nasuni

Nasuni enables organizations to store, protect, synchronize and collaborate on files across all locations at scale. Nasuni Enterprise Cloud Services™, powered by the Nasuni UniFS® global file system, leverages cloud storage to modernize NAS, file servers, archiving, and backup, while offering transformational new capabilities for multi-site file sharing. By combining the low cost, unlimited capacity, and durability of object storage from leading cloud vendors such as Amazon, Azure, Dell EMC, and IBM, with the high performance, security, and broad application compatibility of traditional file storage, the Nasuni subscription service improves workforce productivity, simplifies IT operations, and reduces IT costs. The world’s largest companies in 12 industry sectors rely on Nasuni to maximize the business value of their file data and ensure business continuity. Nasuni is based in Boston, Mass. USA.

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