



Hybrid Apparel modernizes legacy infrastructure and cuts costs with Nasuni® and Google Cloud

Hybrid Apparel is a creative design and manufacturing firm that specializes in making licensed t-shirts for some of the world's most recognizable brands and retailers.

The company's main operations are in California with 450 users spread across three locations. The company works with factories in Egypt, South America, Bangladesh, and China.

Until recently, file storage had been a persistent headache. Users would manually move files and folders when they ran out of capacity. The company's replication and recovery solutions were complex and unreliable, too. "We had one instance in which the system went down hard, and it was pretty much down for two weeks," recalls Mark Valpreda, who manages IT infrastructure for Hybrid Apparel. "I was checking the old storage systems on weekends, waiting for it to go down. That was one of the last things I'd do on a Sunday night and the first thing Monday morning. It was bad."

HYBRID
APPAREL



Industry

State & local government

Cloud file storage

Nasuni

Object storage

AWS S3

Use cases

NAS consolidation;
data protection

Benefits

Infrastructure reduction;
simplicity and ease of use;
painless migration; automatic
file data protection



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Mark Valpreda, IT Infrastructure Consultant

Valpreda has been in IT for more than twenty years, so before he started searching for an alternative, he began imagining his ideal solution. He wanted something that would allow his cold data to live in the cloud and keep hot data local, but present them both on the same share, in a way that was seamless to the end user. Then a colleague told him about Nasuni.

“The Nasuni File Data Platform is even better than the ideal I’d envisioned in my head.”

Mark Valpreda, IT Infrastructure Consultant



Nasuni and Google Cloud

Still, Valpreda and his colleagues wanted to be thorough, so they evaluated multiple solutions from different vendors. Ultimately, they would have had to implement much more complex and expensive solutions from other providers in order to deliver the same benefits as Nasuni. “We gave NetApp and the other providers the benefit of the doubt, but the engineering and topology of those solutions got so utterly complex and ridiculous to deliver something that Nasuni just did natively,” explains Valpreda.

The platform’s integration with Google Cloud further cemented Nasuni’s leadership relative to the competition. Nasuni offers a cloud-agnostic solution, but when presented with his options and pricing, Valpreda identified a clear winner. “Once we looked at all of our projected storage costs, including egress fees, it became clear that Google Cloud was going to be significantly better from a cost standpoint,” Valpreda says. “There’s no way I could do anything close to what we’re paying now with Google Cloud and Nasuni given everything we’re getting in return.”

“Nasuni covered cloud storage, backup, ransomware, and more. It became readily apparent that Nasuni was not going to be a tough sell internally.”

Mark Valpreda, IT Infrastructure Consultant

The Nasuni File Data Platform

Today, Adobe Creative files and other unstructured data scales in Google Cloud object storage, while virtual Nasuni Edge Appliances cache files locally for fast access. Backup, replication, and other technologies have been eliminated, as Nasuni delivers all of these capabilities and more in one cloud-native platform. Since deploying the Nasuni File Data Platform in June of 2021, Hybrid Apparel has leveraged a number of benefits, including:

Massive cost savings

Once Hybrid Apparel considered the total cost of ownership for competitive solutions, Nasuni was the obvious choice from an economics standpoint. Leveraging the pricing of Google Cloud only increased the savings. “The projected monthly costs for one of the other major clouds was going to be three or four times what we were looking at for Google Cloud,” Valpreda recalls. “The pricing is really attractive and aggressive for what we do.”

“The ability to sleep at night”

This merely accounts for the hard cost savings. In the past, Valpreda was constantly checking his storage system, but now he doesn't worry about storage or data protection. “The whole solution of Nasuni and Google Cloud saves us money,” he notes, “but what these savings don't account for is that the solution gives me back the ability to sleep at night.”

Set-and-forget simplicity

Hybrid Apparel's previous storage infrastructure was unwieldy and complex. Now storage and data protection are built into the platform, and run automatically with little need for babysitting. “To borrow a phrase from the great Ron Popeil, it's a real set-it-and-forget-it solution,” Valpreda adds. “I touch the system so little that I have to remind myself how to interact with Nasuni if someone can't access a file and needs my help.”



What has been invaluable with Nasuni is the auditing,” adds Valpreda. “When someone says they can't find a folder, I can pop in, look at the auditing, find and move it back relatively quickly.

Mark Valpreda, IT Infrastructure Consultant

Complete visibility

Once Valpreda does refamiliarize himself with the Nasuni File Data Platform, he says it's easy to interact with the single-pane-of-glass Nasuni Management Console, or NMC. “I do everything in the NMC. The dashboard gives me easy-to-understand statistics regarding what's going on with the appliances, my subscription, network traffic and more. It's simple.”

Powerful auditing

Hybrid Apparel's creative artists rely heavily on Wacom tablets, which are fantastic for drawing, but don't work well with Mac Finder. Often, artists mistakenly click and drag one folder into another, and then lose their work. In the past, restoring inadvertently moved folders was incredibly time consuming.

Fast file restores

The same speed applies to restoring deleted files. Now that all files scale in Google Cloud, they're never really lost, and Google Cloud's powerful network means even cold data can be restored locally with surprising speed. “There was one incident where someone deleted a folder, and we were able to bring it back in a shockingly short amount of time,” Valpreda recalls. “I thought it would take an hour, but the next time I looked at the screen, it was there.”

Fast access for creatives

Since frequently accessed files are cached locally on virtual appliances, artists, creative users, and other Hybrid Apparel employees enjoy fast performance. “We have had no issues with performance at all,” Valpreda says. “No complaints.”

Easy access to cold data

Hybrid Apparel’s creative designers often need to access project files from ten or more years ago, especially when working with longtime licensors. Although this cold data resides in Google Cloud, it appears local to end users, and these files are brought down to the cache with surprising speed.

Ransomware protection

Valpreda and the Hybrid Apparel team rest easy knowing that the company will be able to recover quickly in the event of a ransomware attack. Thanks to Nasuni’s Continuous File Versioning® to the cloud, millions of files can be restored in minutes, and the business can return to normal operations in little time.

Outlook & assessment

Given where Hybrid Apparel stood with its storage and backup environment three years ago, Valpreda and the IT group are very pleased with the results of their Nasuni / Google Cloud solution. “Having a platform that we don’t have to worry about and which doesn’t require our attention has been so helpful,” he adds. The added cost savings and reliability of Google Cloud has been a tremendous advantage as well.

Overall, the combination of Google Cloud and the Nasuni File Data Platform has allowed the creative teams, IT administrators, and business leaders at Hybrid Apparel to focus on what they do best – designing iconic clothing for the world’s leading brands.

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Nasuni is a fluid data platform for enterprises facing an explosion of unstructured data in an AI world, eliminating the choice between expensive tinkering or an overwhelming transformation of your entire data infrastructure.

The Nasuni File Data Platform delivers effortless scale in hybrid cloud environments, enables control at the network edge, and meets the modern enterprise expectation for protected, insight- and AI-ready data. It simplifies file data management while increasing access and performance.

Consolidate data, cut costs, and empower users – all while transforming your data from obstacle into opportunity.