CASE STUDY

ITHACA ENERGY

Oil & Gas Leader Reduces Costs, Supports Remote Operations, and Facilitates M&A with Nasuni®

To support its growing business, Ithaca Energy traded traditional file infrastructure for scalable, cost-effective cloud file storage

INDUSTRY:
Oil & Gas

CLOUD FILE STORAGE:
Nasuni

OBJECT STORAGE:
Microsoft Azure Blob Storage

USE CASES:
File Storage Consolidation; Storage/Backup/ DR to the cloud; M&A Integration; Cloud VDI; Multi-Site Collaboration

BENEFITS:
Significant cost savings; fast performance for power geoscience users; cloud VDI support; improved recoveries; unlimited capacity; faster M&A integration; simpler IT management

Ithaca Energy is a leading independent oil and gas company with production, development and exploration, operations in the UK North Sea, headquartered in Aberdeen. The company has a diverse portfolio of offshore assets and an onshore office. With a relentless focus on high performance, Ithaca Energy's goal is to deliver sustainable growth underpinned by operational excellence and financial discipline. Pursuing a strategy of growth through acquisition, the company recently acquired Chevron's Central North Sea assets.

This acquisition expanded the company's file data by 250%, but Ithaca Energy had already begun looking for a new way to store, protect, and share its unstructured data long before the Chevron deal. "In oil and gas we use very large data sets," explains Ithaca Energy's IT Operations Manager Malcolm Brown. "We were always having to buy storage that would have to expand at some point in the future or be replaced completely, which was not a practical or cost-effective approach."

Ithaca Energy also relied upon nightly backups to disk and tapes that were frustrating to manage, expensive, and unreliable. The company needed a file services solution that would:

- Cut the cost of file storage, data protection, and collaboration
- Maintain fast file access for its end-users
- Facilitate the onboarding of new assets
- Reduce risk through comprehensive data protection and DR
- Support offshore operations
- Simplify the company's IT environment

NASUNI®

Ithaca Energy had already adopted a cloud-first approach to evaluating new solutions and applied this to Nasuni. “Nasuni presented as a fit-for-purpose cloud solution that could replace traditional backup,” Brown recalls. “It was clear that this was the solution we had been looking for.”

Nasuni Cloud File Services

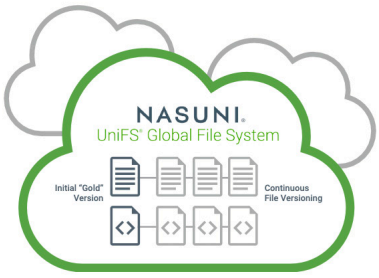
The Nasuni cloud file services platform empowers every Ithaca Energy location with unlimited file storage capacity in Azure Blob Storage, built-in backup, disaster recovery, and local file server performance. Since becoming a customer in December 2018, the company has continued to expand their deployment of Nasuni.

Cost Savings

“We put together a cost model which included, amongst other things, hardware file storage, tape backups and other products incurring annual maintenance fees,” Brown explains. “When we analyzed the model, it was clear that the Nasuni subscription model offered us cost savings.”

Data Authenticity & Infinite Scale in Azure

Active files are cached locally on virtual Nasuni Edge Appliances, but all file data and metadata scales in cost-effective Azure Blob Storage. For Ithaca Energy, this means no more unplanned capacity upgrades, but there is an added benefit that Brown refers to as “data authenticity”. Although files are cached locally, the gold or master copy of each file resides in the cloud, where the original and all the deltas are stored as immutable objects.



“The original piece of data loaded into Nasuni **never gets worked** on. You’re only ever working on a copy, so you can always go back to your original data. “This is really valuable in our industry. You wouldn’t believe the number of times people have asked me to **recover data** as it was **originally delivered** to them.” *Malcolm Brown: IT Operations Manager*

Matching NetApp on Performance

Initially, the company deployed a single Nasuni appliance to serve all its users, from office workers to geoscience experts relying on complex software. However, Brown has now deployed additional virtual appliances. After tuning, optimization, and testing, Brown and his team are delighted. “We are achieving increased digital performance using the Nasuni appliances,” Brown says.

“In particular, we’re getting **better write times**, and read performance is roughly the same throughout the organization — even when using our **complex geoscience data.”** *Malcolm Brown: IT Operations Manager*

Faster File Recoveries

“Nasuni offers excellent support and the faster file recovery that Nasuni provides ensures that we can make data available to any of our locations within 30-minutes, which is critical in helping maintain business continuity,” Brown says.

Facilitating Mergers and Acquisitions

Nasuni’s ability to quickly integrate acquisitions proved to be a strong selling point for the company.

“Acquisition of an additional off-shore asset does not present an issue — we are able to **deploy Nasuni** and **within 15 minutes**, able to view and use that data **across all our locations**.” *Malcolm Brown: IT Operations Manager*

Still, the Chevron North Sea Limited acquisition was a major test. The transaction provided Brown and his team with significantly more data than they expected. This was hugely valuable data and included — seismic data, well data, logistics, CAD files, office projects, and more. Nasuni provided an easy way to quickly migrate data into Ithaca Energy’s primary cloud-file repository — while giving all users access to the same file system.

Offshore File Services

Nasuni is designed in part to be able to extend file services to any location and Ithaca Energy has proved this out by deploying a virtual appliance on an offshore drill rig.

"With Nasuni, users offshore **access the data locally,**" Brown details. "Meanwhile, the onshore teams are accessing the same files and folders through **their local appliance**. Nothing changes for them and we manage everything onshore, which has been great." *Malcolm Brown: IT Operations Manager*

Running Lean Remotely

Demonstrating success offshore gives Brown and his team a model for future deployments. "We've now shown that we can run these offshore deployments in a production environment in a lean way," he says. "We've proven that it works effectively in the offshore environment over a low bandwidth circuit with high-latency."

Next Steps: VDI in the Cloud & Continued Growth

The features of the Nasuni platform and cost efficiencies ensured that Nasuni would have an immediate impact, but Brown is also excited about the long-term potential. The company is steadily swapping local infrastructure in favor of VDI and has deployed a virtual appli- ance in Azure to serve VDI users. "Our people are able to access the same data sets that their colleagues are using in their new location," he adds. "We are considering deploying more Nasuni appliances in Azure." Overall, he adds, "Nasuni is a multi-scenario solution, not just local file storage, backups, or DR. It's helping us look forward and future-proof."

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