



INDUSTRY

AEC

CLOUD FILE SERVICES

Nasuni

OBJECT STORAGE

Microsoft Azure

USE CASES

NAS Consolidation;
Cloud Backup; Cloud
Disaster Recovery;
Cross-Office File Sharing

BENEFITS

80% reduction in local
hardware infrastructure;
reduced risk; enhanced
productivity of contractors
and employees; improved
multi-site management



Latency, Capacity Limits, and Rising Costs: How File Storage Hardware Drove Hull & Associates, LLC to Nasuni's Integrated Solution

Hull is a project development and consulting firm specializing in environmental and civil engineering, waste management, and redevelopment.

In recent years, as the company expanded, IT determined that Hull's file storage infrastructure was not built for growth.

Accessing large files was often tedious and slow, which hampered collaboration. Data protection was time-consuming and expensive. And file growth was outpacing capacity upgrades. After Hull evaluated numerous possibilities, the IT group determined that Nasuni offered the only solution

that met its needs and aligned with the larger goals of the company.

Based in Dublin, Ohio, Hull is spread across seven different locations, and the IT group supports 175 end-users who often need to collaborate on the same projects. That means accessing the 2GB drawings, CAD renderings, and GIS images that represent the core of Hull's environmental and civil engineering business.

Drivers	Requirements	Nasuni Solution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow file access speeds at remote offices • Difficulty collaborating across offices on shared projects • Expensive, maintenance-intensive backup; 24-hour RPOs • Rising storage costs and limited capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-performance access and collaboration at all locations • Faster RTOs and better RPOs • A unified management platform for IT • Cost-effective, flexible scalability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An integrated, cloud-native file system with unlimited scale • High-performance distributed file access • 15-min RTOs and minimal RPOs • 60% savings on operational costs



Unfortunately, Hull’s previous file storage infrastructure was not built for high-performance collaboration. “When we would have a file hosted in our Dublin, Ohio office and we had employees in Cleveland working on that file, the latency was horrible,” says Director of IT Kevin Wildman.

Data protection was equally cumbersome. Local employees at each office were running tape backups every night. But the volume of business files was growing so quickly that backups were spilling over into the next day. “We’d have data being written to the servers while backups were still going on,” says Network Administrator Rick Brock. If one of those files was lost, IT would have to remotely coordinate with somebody at that location—typically office personnel, not IT specialists—to restore the file from tape. Even then, the end-user would lose at least 24-hours of work.

Rising costs and scalability were additional pain points. Hull was maintaining 14 file servers across seven different locations. Whenever the company needed to scale up at a location, that also meant scaling the hardware and licensing costs.

Wildman and his team considered building their own network operations center. They looked into WAN optimization solutions and cloud storage providers, too, but each had its drawbacks. When they learned of Nasuni, Wildman and Brock were initially skeptical. “It was almost like we were being sold something that was too good to be true,” Wildman recalls. “We were pretty eager to start testing the solution.”

Nasuni File Services

Initially, Hull moved 500GB worth of reference data for GIS drawings into Nasuni. “We wanted to make sure we were using kind of the worst-case scenario,” Wildman says. “We didn’t want to take an easy pilot test and hope it worked well for the hard stuff.”

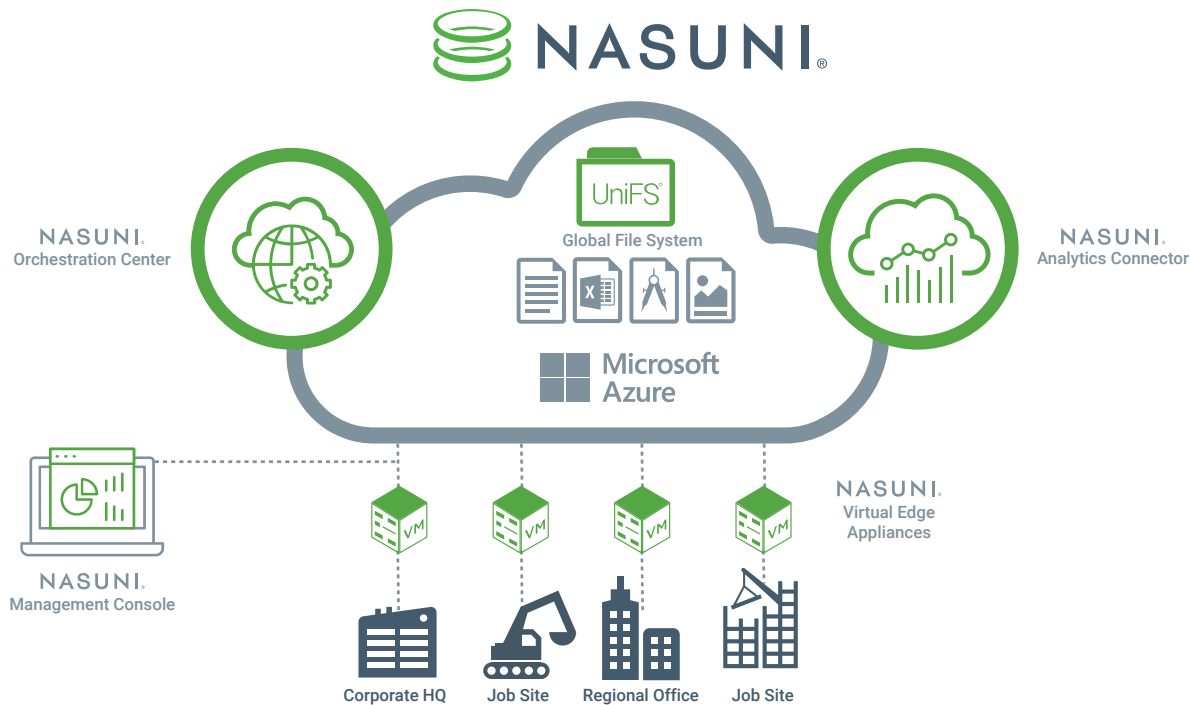
Nasuni Professional Services worked closely with Hull’s IT group to ensure that the service and appliances were optimized. For the first week, Wildman did not notify anyone of the switch. He wanted honest, unbiased feedback, and he got it. His end-users didn’t notice that they weren’t on traditional local servers. “There was no latency,” he recalls. “They were hitting a server that was located on site, so they were getting that same feel, but we were able to push everything to the cloud.”

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— Kevin Wildman, director of IT

After the successful pilot, Hull moved 95% of its corporate data to Nasuni. The company now enjoys a wide range of benefits, including unlimited scale, continuous versioning and high-performance distributed access.

Since Nasuni eliminates the need for additional data protection, IT has also retired seven tape drives, along with fourteen to fifteen tapes used per day.



High-Performance Distributed Access

Previously, employees had to navigate different directories to find the files they needed. Now there is only one directory for them to consult. Furthermore, the files they need remain in a local cache to ensure fast performance at every location, not just the office at which that file originated.

A continuously updated gold copy of each file also resides in the cloud. This way, Hull designers can access and collaborate on the most recent version of a file from any location or mobile device. And Nasuni's global file locking technology ensures that there will be no editing conflicts.

Continuous Versioning

With Nasuni, changes are frequently sent to the cloud, updating the gold copy of each file. This allows IT to restore access to lost or deleted files or even entire file systems within minutes. The process itself is also much easier on IT. "When I'd receive a ticket for a lost file, it would take approximately two hours to close," says Help Desk Administrator Andre Butler. "With Nasuni, start to finish, we're talking five to ten minutes. In some cases, two minutes." Since Nasuni eliminates the need for additional data protection, IT has also retired seven tape drives, along with fourteen to fifteen tapes used per day.

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Centralized Management

Previously, IT had to travel to a location to maintain its file server. Now that Nasuni has unified all of these storage silos into an integrated file system, the group can utilize the Nasuni Management Console to remotely maintain distant offices, restore lost files, provision added capacity, and more.

How IT Transformed File Storage Into a Business Enabler

The partnership with Hull demonstrates how Nasuni helps IT align with larger business goals. Eliminating the costly reliance on traditional storage and protection hardware is one such aspect. “We’ve consolidated all of our data into the Nasuni system and we’re saving probably 60%,” says Wildman.

Nasuni is also designed to facilitate business growth. In the past, when Hull acquired another company, simply integrating that new location took months. Today the situation is different. Wildman says Nasuni allowed his group to onboard a newly acquired company in about a week. “It really increases the collaboration, the speed at which data gets combined and the feeling of being one company a lot faster,” Wildman says. “Any organization that deals with a lot of data or has a workforce that needs to work collaboratively would benefit from Nasuni.”

About Nasuni

Nasuni® is a file services platform built for the cloud, to consolidate and replace file server and NAS silos with cloud storage, delivering infinite scale, built-in backup, global file sharing, and local file server performance, all at half the cost of traditional file infrastructures.

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