JERDE

Innovative Architecture Firm Adopts Nasuni® to Support Global Growth

A diverse group of designers, architects, and thinkers, JERDE creates multi-layered built environments full of wonder.

INDUSTRY:
AEC

FILE DATA PLATFORM:
Nasuni

OBJECT STORAGE:
Microsoft Azure

USE CASES:
NAS Consolidation;
Data Protection;
Global File Synchronization

BENEFITS:
fast global collaboration and file synchronization; unlimited, on-demand, flexible storage capacity; rapid file data and ransomware recovery; simpler management; low-latency virtualization for file workflows

A diverse group of designers, architects, and thinkers, JERDE creates multi-layered built environments full of wonder. The JERDE team has spent more than 40 years perfecting how they collaborate with each other and their clients to create thoughtful, creative solutions. For much of JERDE's history, the traditional methods of storing, sharing, and protecting file data worked just fine. As the business expanded, however, IT leadership recognized that a change was in order.

JERDE's work now extends from the streets of Shanghai to the sands of California. "We became more global, with projects all over the world," explains JERDE CIO Joe Marando. "At the same time, the size of the files we work with has grown. In general, our AutoCAD drawings were 5-10MB in size. Now our clients want to be immersed in the project, almost like a video game, so we rely on 3D files that are 50 or 100 times as large, and we have to share these files between Los Angeles, Singapore, and Shanghai."

Marando and his team began evaluating cloud solutions, refining their requirements along the way. JERDE relies on latency-sensitive apps like Adobe InDesign and Autodesk Revit, and files have to sync rapidly and efficiently at a global scale to support JERDE's creative teams. Marando determined that a mesh architecture, in which offices need to sync directly with one another, would not work optimally because of latency challenges. "We realized the stateless hub-and-spoke architecture of Nasuni would handle latency better," he says. "It would be more reliable."

The combination of technical architecture, scalability, simpler data protection, global file synchronization, and proven success with leading AEC firms convinced JERDE to select Nasuni.

NASUNI.

Nasuni & Azure

Today, JERDE's design files and unstructured data scale in the Nasuni File Data Platform backed by Azure Blob storage. "Deploying Nasuni with Azure Blob as the backend object store was for us an obvious choice," Marando notes. The firm relies on Office365, OneDrive, and other Microsoft products, and Azure's footprint in Asia would suit JERDE's Asian offices.

In conjunction with Azure, the Nasuni File Data Platform unlocks multiple advantages for JERDE, including some the firm did not foresee.

Faster Global Collaboration

High-speed file synchronization, Global File Acceleration, and Nasuni Global File Lock technology accelerate collaboration between offices, ensuring that end users have rapid access to the most recent designs. "Being able to sync unstructured data like these large design files between multiple locations has been one of our major technical challenges," Marando explains. "That problem is solved with the Nasuni-Azure solution."

Simpler Management

Previously, IT was managing a mix of disparate solutions in distant offices. Backup management in particular was a time-consuming hassle. Now, Marando and his team have one platform that handles storage, data protection, and global file synchronization at all locations. Plus, everything can be adjusted remotely through the Nasuni Management Console.

Accelerated Workflow Recoveries

Working with 3D files isn't easy, as they sometimes become corrupted and need to be recovered from previous versions. Designers may also want to recover a rendering from a few hours or weeks ago for other reasons. "We're looking for a two-hour-old version or yesterday's version often," Marando notes, and Nasuni Continuous Versioning® maintains an unlimited, immutable version stream in Azure. "I love the file recovery functionality with Nasuni."

Rapid Ransomware Recovery

Marando recognized Nasuni's potential as a rapid ransomware recovery tool. "We all have to plan for or face the imminent problem of ransomware," Marando notes. "The Nasuni-Azure snapshotting approach just works. If ransomware hits, you just go back and restore your data from right before the attack, and you get your data back."

Virtualization & Flexibility

When JERDE takes on a large project, the firm sometimes hires consultants temporarily, and these users need to be able to work as if they're part of the JERDE team. Marando is considering deploying virtual workstations in Azure, then connecting them to an Azure-based Nasuni Edge Appliance. The file data would reside close to the workstation, ensuring fast performance. "We could have that up and running pretty quickly," he notes, "and the latency between the virtual desktop and Nasuni will be negligible."

Virtual Client Reviews

In the past, the principal designer would meet with clients face to face to go over revisions. That changed with COVID. "We might not be able to travel to the site now, but Nasuni allows us to set it up so a project manager, project architect and client can pull up drawings on a laptop or iPad and mark them up digitally," says Marando. "Because the files are synced, we could be working on them at the end of the day in Los Angeles, and they'll be available and updated for the client in Shanghai the next morning. That's a really big win for us."

Strategic Agility & Outlook

Generally, Nasuni has changed the way Marando and his team think about storing, sharing, protecting, and extending access to file data. The Nasuni File Data platform is more agile, scalable, and flexible, and better suited to the firm's current business model and continued global growth.