

LEO A DALY Accelerates File Synchronization by 5x and Leverages Rapid Ransomware Recovery with Nasuni®

LEO A DALY is a globally recognized architecture, engineering, planning and interior design firm that remains family-owned after more than 100 years in business.

INDUSTRY:

Architecture, Engineering & Construction

CLOUD FILE STORAGE:

Nasuni

OBJECT STORAGE:

Microsoft Azure
Blob Storage

USE CASES:

NAS Consolidation;
Data Protection;
Global File Synchronization

BENEFITS:

5x faster collaboration between offices; 67% local storage hardware reduction; unified file solution across dozens of locations; rapid ransomware recovery; avoided \$700,000 backup refresh

Made up of a diverse team of thinkers, dreamers, and makers, LEO A DALY looks to transform the human experience by designing and creating places that truly matter. The firm's work is as diverse as its globally distributed talent, ranging from air traffic control towers to redesigned office workplaces, cafes, hotels, and transit stations.

Dedicated to innovation, LEO A DALY was one of the first AEC firms to recognize the transformative potential of cloud file storage. In 2015, the company deployed Nasuni to reduce its storage hardware footprint, consolidate its siloed storage infrastructure, and improve file backup and recovery. "If we go back to the beginning, we had multiple things we were trying to solve," says CIO Stephen Held. "All of the Nasuni selling points matched to problems we were trying to tackle in various ways."

More recently, the firm has successfully deployed Nasuni's latest innovation, Global File Acceleration, which has sped up collaboration between distant offices, improving global workflows.

Multiple Problems, One Solution

In switching to Nasuni, LEO A DALY was able to consolidate dozens of locations under a single global file system in the cloud. Thanks to Nasuni, file data scales in cost-effective Azure Blob Storage, and caching edge appliances ensure that architects, designers, and engineers always have fast access to the files and models they need. The unique cloud-native design of the Nasuni platform allows LEO A DALY's IT leadership to solve several pressing storage- and backup-related problems with a single platform.

- 1. Eliminates redundant data across multiple locations:** The firm had been struggling with scalability, but with Nasuni, all file data scales in one global file system, not on local hardware.
- 2. Unifies different geographic locations under one platform:** Previously siloed storage sites became part of a cloud-based file system, simplifying infrastructure for IT. “With Nasuni, everyone’s working off the same file set,” says System Administrator Bryan Biondo. “We don’t have to manage individual storage arrays in each office.”
- 3. Improves data protection and accelerates recoveries:** Nasuni allowed LEO A DALY to eliminate cumbersome backups in favor of Nasuni’s modern approach with Continuous File Versioning® to the cloud. This vastly improved recovery points and recovery times and allowed the firm to avoid investing \$700,000 in backup costs.
- 4. Switches file storage from capex to opex:** In the past, LEO A DALY had to purchase physical hardware to provision enough capacity at each site. Sites that once required 30 TB arrays now need only 10 TB – a 67% reduction in storage hardware footprint. With Nasuni, storage is now managed as a service, and can be expanded incrementally on demand.

By eliminating backup and reducing the firm’s global infrastructure footprint, Nasuni also freed up IT dollars to allocate to other, higher-value projects. “I don’t have to buy large storage devices anymore because our data is in Azure,” notes CIO Held. “I’ll add capacity annually, depending on our needs, but I’m not going out spending half a million dollars on a new device every couple of years.”

Rapid Ransomware Recovery

The cloud-native architecture and technology that powers Nasuni also enables Rapid Ransomware Recovery, with the ability to deliver blazing-fast restores of millions of files in just minutes. Restoring previous versions of maliciously encrypted files is as simple as dialing back to the point just before the attack happened. Customers can either restore entire volumes and directories or surgically recover individual files for specific users. Recovery points are as recent as 1 minute prior to an attack.

LEO A DALY experienced the benefits of Rapid Ransomware Recovery firsthand. After an individual with elevated rights opened a malicious link, entire network file shares were being encrypted by ransomware. LEO A DALY recognized the problem quickly and cut internet access to sever the connection and stop further spread. The team spent the next 12 hours assessing the potential damage before determining that files were impacted. With Nasuni, it took the team less than an hour to get fully recovered, validated file data back into the production environment.

“Nasuni was **a true lifesaver** when we were hit by ransomware,” says Held. “After containing the attack and figuring out what was impacted, we were able to restore all file data and our **operations hardly missed a beat.**”

Faster Collaboration with Global File Acceleration

Although Nasuni met its initial needs, and protected the firm against ransomware outages, LEO A DALY was looking for more out of its cloud storage solution. The firm wanted talent based in different offices to be able to collaborate as if they were in the same location. That’s where Nasuni’s new Global File Acceleration (GFA) technology is making an enormous impact.

“It was already simple to manage and collaborate on our global file shares across 27 locations, and file synchronization has always been much faster than traditional methods. But with this latest release, the **performance is dramatically faster.**”

– Stephen Held, Vice President and Chief Information Officer, LEO A DALY



The complexity of the solution is masked from the architects, engineers, and designers, too — all the synchronization and prioritization happens automatically. “As far as the end user is concerned, they really don’t know what’s going on behind the scenes,” notes Biondo. “They just think, ‘Hey, I worked on a file in my office and sometimes within a minute, my coworker in another office is able to see it right away.’ So it’s great. It’s almost like they’re working on the same appliance.”

Revolutionary for the Industry

The solution saves valuable time for LEO A DALY’s talented and highly qualified end users. “In terms of person hours, it’s beneficial,” Biondo adds, “because you don’t have users sitting there hitting the F5 key every few minutes waiting for a new file to appear.”



In a larger sense, GFA is also fulfilling the grander promise and potential of cloud file storage that inspired the firm to partner with Nasuni in the first place. “When we first signed on, Nasuni was still pretty young,” says CIO Held. “It was revolutionary for us as a firm and as an industry. Now we look back at Nasuni’s main competitors at the time, and today, and I can say that **Nasuni has really delivered.**”

GFA is a breakthrough approach to file synchronization that uses a highly-available cloud service to dramatically speed data propagation of new files between distant offices globally. GFA adds a new layer of innovative intelligence to Nasuni’s cloud architecture that tracks user collaboration activity and file usage patterns in real time, then orchestrates and prioritizes data propagation so that global users gain the very fastest access to the new data that they need most. Nasuni is already a proven enterprise leader in global file synchronization, but GFA further optimizes the technology for large, distributed firms like LEO A DALY.

Implementing GFA was simple and straightforward, according to Biondo, and only required roughly 15 minutes of work in the Nasuni Management Console (NMC). Once the technology was up and running, Biondo noticed an immediate 5x performance acceleration in data propagation across their entire environment. Global end users were quickly able to reap the benefits of GFA. For example, users in Nebraska are delighted to gain immediate access to all the new files that their remote colleagues in California create. In fact, Biondo and his team heard of no issues from their end users — always a good sign in the IT world.



ABOUT NASUNI, CORPORATION

Nasuni provides modern cloud file storage, powered by the world’s only cloud-native global file system. Nasuni is a cloud replacement for traditional network attached storage (NAS) and file server silos, consolidating file data in instantly expandable cloud object storage at a fraction of the cost. Nasuni also eliminates the need for complex legacy backup and disaster recovery infrastructure, dramatically simplifying IT administration. Nasuni is headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts, USA. For more information, visit www.nasuni.com.

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