



Fortune 100 Financial Services Firm Consolidates Storage in Thousands of Branches with CTERA Cloud Storage Gateways

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M.R., Storage Architect

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Highlights

- ▶ Replaced aging Windows file servers
- ▶ Automated and centralized data protection of branch data
- ▶ Leveraged existing storage infrastructure
- ▶ Enabled easy, secure local file sharing
- ▶ Reduced support costs and on-site IT visits
- ▶ Achieved TCO reduction of 80%

Company Background

This Fortune 100 company in the financial services sector serves tens of millions of customers through its network of thousands of branches across the United States. The branches are quite small, each typically comprising fewer than 20 employees, with no IT staff on site. Being the company's main interface with its customers on both the sales and customer service fronts, the branches are considered a cardinal part of its core business.

The Challenge

The company's branch office users regularly create and share data among themselves. Microsoft Windows file servers had been used for this task but they were nearing the end of their lifecycle and needed replacement. Additionally, an application used by branch employees was backed up daily using proprietary software, but with no off-site copy for disaster recovery, and no ability to monitor backups, or rapidly restore files in the event of a crash or outage. Moreover, this existing solution was expensive to operate, consuming IT support resources. The company needed a different approach, one that would combine local storage capabilities with full centralized management, off-site backup, and the scalability to handle thousands of locations and tens of thousands of users – all at a palatable cost.



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The IT department had set its sights on a private cloud storage architecture, which would provide the required data access control and security. However, finding cost-effective ways to extend that infrastructure to the company's remote branches was proving difficult. WAN optimization options were too expensive to consider for such a large number of sites, and traditional NAS solutions were rejected due to lack of centralized management and the lack of integrated private cloud backup. The company sought a solution that would combine the capabilities of enterprise-grade small-footprint NAS appliances, with scalable management, WAN optimization and private cloud storage integration.

The CTERA Solution

After an RFP process and extensive testing, the company chose the CTERA cloud storage platform. CTERA C200 cloud storage gateway appliances were deployed at all remote branches, replacing the old Windows servers. The CTERA C200 is a small form-factor appliance with 2 SATA hard drives, providing up to 8TB of local storage capacity and RAID-1 mirroring for redundancy. To branch users, the C200 appears as a regular file server via the Windows File Sharing protocol (CIFS), allowing them to store, share and back up files.

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Management of the thousands of CTERA appliances is fully centralized, with CTERA Portal providing real-time monitoring, logging, customized email alerts and remote firmware upgrade capabilities. It allows the customer to manage the entire operation with a skeleton crew, to reduce the number of branch support calls, and to minimize on-site visits by IT.

The CTERA solution has enabled the customer to replace aging, expensive Windows file servers with a lean, cloud-integrated solution that reduced TCO by 80%, which due to the large scale of the deployment translates into many millions of dollars. More importantly, it provided the customer with centralized management of branch storage and enforcement of data protection policies, while preserving the advantages of local storage, including rapid file access and recovery.