

Mead & Hunt

Expansion, Global File Locking, Cost Controls Drive Mead & Hunt to Panzura

Mead & Hunt vice president and director of IT Andy Knauf had a problem. Even through the recession, the company continued a pattern of steady growth, including adding several new offices at a fast pace. This ongoing expansion required a new set of infrastructure equipment (servers, racks, networking, etc.) to be acquired, installed, configured, and tested at each new office. Not only did this result in significant equipment costs, but the disruption to the IT department to fly someone to the remote location to do the work also was expensive.

The Customer, the Challenges

Mead & Hunt, headquartered in Madison, Wisconsin, is a multi-disciplined Engineering and Architectural firm in operation since 1900. With 480 employees and 27 offices in 16 states, the company provides services to many different markets, including Aviation, Transportation, Federal, and Water Resources. With a large percentage of these employees regularly utilizing design applications like Autodesk Civil 3D and Revit (just to name two of the dozens of applications employed daily), providing maximum performance for this distributed workforce was becoming increasingly difficult. Each location became a small island creating issues when project team members in different locations needed to share data. Compounding the problem was the rapid expansion into new locations, as well as plans for a new office headquarters

With Panzura, Mead & Hunt was able to:

- *Centralize storage into the Amazon S3 cloud*
- *Effectively share data across remote offices and improve user "file open" experience with Panzura's Global Read/Write solution*
- *Reduce overall IT costs by reducing data processing resources at each remote location*
- *Simplify the time and effort required to open and equip each new location*

facility. Andy Knauf needed a solution that improved data sharing for remote team members while simplifying the overall IT structure with minimal associated costs.

Simplification Needed

Previously, when a new location was established, a small rack of new hardware had to be delivered to the remote location. This hardware typically would consist of a couple of small Windows servers and a small SAN solution (Mead & Hunt has used both EMC and NetApp) along with the requisite networking. All this then had to be configured to work together, to support the local user community, and to provide backup and replication of data back to HQ. This required an IT person from HQ to be onsite for several days and continue to tune and adjust the setup for a few weeks after that.

With Panzura, the process has been streamlined considerably. Now it involves acquiring a single Windows server (primarily to run Active Directory), a Panzura Cloud Controller, a UPS, and the necessary LAN/WAN networking gear for that office. This equipment can be assembled at HQ into a shippable rolling rack, configured at HQ as if it already was located at the remote office. The project data required for that particular location can be pre-cached onto the Panzura Controller and then the entire configuration tested (still at HQ). This configuration process is much simpler than previous and can be accomplished in just a couple of days versus the week-plus required onsite to configure the previous solution. Finally, the rolling rack can be shipped to the new location where all that is required for setup is to plug in the power and the network connections.

"I've worked in IT at Mead & Hunt for more than 23 years and when a issue of this magnitude is solved, I like to call it a holy grail monument. I've only ever said that twice before, Panzura makes it three. That's how great this product is to the industry."

—Andy Knauf, Vice President and Director of IT, Mead & Hunt

Benefits

With the centralization of project data into the Amazon S3 cloud, Mead & Hunt have seen significant reductions in storage costs because hardware previously required for both backups and disaster-recovery is no longer necessary. Less equipment in each remote office also lowers cost by introducing less heat and lowering energy consumption. Redundancy is simplified by configuring for problems to fail-over to HQ, which has access to up-to-date project data stored in the cloud. But the most significant benefit is that the file locking problem that occurs with multiple remote users working on the same project at the same time is addressed.

Panzura's Cloud Controller with Global Read/Write protection ensures that multiple users can safely work on files within the same project without fear of stepping on each other. Copying files is no longer necessary, so everyone knows that they're always working on the most recently updated files. The Cloud Controller's built-in deduplication and encryption also ensure that storage costs are kept to a minimum while simultaneously protecting project data from unscrupulous access. Panzura's file access acceleration also means that remote users can open centralized project libraries in seconds instead of minutes, allowing projects to be completed on-time even with very large project teams.

For existing offices or new ones, data access and security, controllable costs, and ease of use are now standard expectations. With the Panzura solution in place, Mead & Hunt have been able to execute the company's expansion in a quick, secure, and cost efficient manner.

For additional, in-depth information on file locking, please read our white paper: [Global File Locking](#)

