

Challenge

- Affordable, scalable storage for University Classroom Collaboration

Solution

- EtherDrive SR series used as scalable shared storage pool.

Benefits

- 50% Cost savings over alternatives.



Introduction

The College of Rural and Community Development at the University of Alaska is creating an integrated social software service for collaborative classroom communities, using WordPress Multi-User and a PMWiki Farm. University instructors use the new service to create collaborative classroom communities across Rural Alaska.

This summer Alaska Native high-schools and undergraduate science students will be blogging, vlogging, and podcasting their experiences at an on-site Summer Science Camp in Nunivak Island. They will be virtually teamed with a similar group of Native South Pacific Islanders in a similar camp doing podcasts and videocasts of science news and notes. The technology used includes digital cameras, iPods with microphones, WordPress, and Sorenson Squeeze video compression software.

Business Need

What UAF needed was multiple Terabytes of data storage that provided low logistical overhead and affordable scalability. Previous collaboration tools were scattered and space limited and the user-experience was disjointed. The community server provides adequate bandwidth and space with a consistent interface to for all classroom and individual blogs, video blogging, podcasting, and wiki communities.

Solution

The University of Alaska selected Coraid's SR1520 as the disk storage solution for both the online class files as well as it's archiving needs . Storage for the class files are handled by two mirrored SR1520s using LVM to connect to servers with Cat 6 switches running Linux Mandriva 2006. 400 GB disks are configured into RAID 5 sets. Archiving needs are being met by an additional SR1520. They are using XSF as the file system.

Alternatives Considered

The Center for Distance Education previously used individual computers for it's archiving needs. Class files were stored on internal hard drives in various systems and servers. Backup was done using an Adec Fast

Stor 22 which was only able to handle 1.7TB. The need was growing by 900GB per month. “We have saved thousands of dollars using EtherDrive Storage, but more importantly our IT resources can now handle our growing needs for expandability!”, said Joshua Kugler, Sys Admin, UAF.

