Hewlett Packard Enterprise

VEXCEL
IMAGING

THE WORLD FROM ABOVE: RAZOR-SHARP DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

High-end camera manufacturer Vexcel Imaging unlocks new business areas with HPE and Qumulo

Industry
Photographic

Objective
Powerful, hybrid cloud infrastructure with fast data processing that enables Vexcel to provide its customers with a reliable digital service for aerial photography

Approach
Completely new IT environment with HPE Apollo 4200 Gen10 Servers in cluster and mixed storage SSD/HDD architecture via Qumulo 180 TB nodes and HPE ProLiant DL360 Gen10 servers

IT matters
- Powerful, reliable, and highly scalable data center solution
- Hybrid cloud infrastructure with a perfect balance between performance, capacity, and security
- Easier, central management of all IT components
- Seamless workflows and comprehensive control thanks to real-time monitoring

Business matters
- Enables new Vexcel service
- Increases speed and agility in project implementation
- Delivers lean infrastructure according to current needs
- Offers great potential for expansion

Innovation and curiosity have always been the driving forces behind Vexcel Imaging. Over the years, the Graz-based camera manufacturer had made a name for itself worldwide with its UltraCam series of high-end devices. Their mission—to shoot razor-sharp, high-resolution images for digital map systems or other geographic applications from the air or on the ground to give users a detailed insight into new worlds on their PC and smartphone. Now it was time for Vexcel itself to move into new digital business worlds. The company's data acquisition of large-format images from the air is all set up as a Vexcel service on a powerful hybrid cloud infrastructure, provided by HPE and Qumulo.

> **"If you imagine that one of our cameras alone produces around five to seven terabytes of data during a flight, it quickly becomes clear why we need a powerful, reliable, and highly scalable IT infrastructure for our service."**

– Alexander Wiechert, CEO, Vexcel Imaging

HPE and Qumulo pave way for Vexcel to increase speed and agility, providing lean infrastructure, and offering great potential for expansion.

Vexcel Data Program (VDP) has heralded a new era for Vexcel Imaging. As a developer and manufacturer of high-end cameras for large-format, digital aerial photography, Vexcel has been and continues to be the global market leader. Innovative and medium-sized, its annual sales is in the double-digit million range and has around 105 employees at Graz in Austria and Denver, Boulder, and Seattle in the U.S. Vexcel has ventured into digital aerial photographs as a service, or just briefly VDP.

"We have long recognized in the market the desire for such a solution, then thought about how we can fulfill it. VDP was the result," explains Alexander Wiechert, CEO of Vexcel Imaging. Since 2018, Vexcel has been flying to cities and regions in the U.S., taking high-resolution aerial photographs and then making them available to customers via a cloud solution.

In addition to the regular work, the Vexcel crew also immediately responds after natural disasters to take pictures of areas affected by floods or hurricanes. In a unique 24-hour turnaround service, the data is processed on the Vexcel computers and is available the next day in the cloud for government organizations, rescue services, or even insurance companies. They use the data for direct rescue missions, infrastructure construction, or for damage assessment/ damage settlement. It is easy to imagine that time is an immensely critical factor here.

Therefore, the biggest challenge for Vexcel with this new service was fast data processing. "If you imagine that one of our cameras produces around five to seven terabytes of data on a flight alone, it quickly becomes clear why we need a powerful, reliable, and highly scalable IT infrastructure for our service that can handle this amount of data," Wiechert emphasizes.

HPE AND QUMULO: POWERFUL TEAM FOR THE HYBRID CLOUD

For the international expansion of the VDP in June 2019, Head of IT at Vexcel, Christian Lackner and his team began to plan from a blank page. They wanted to be completely free to put the ambitious IT project on a strong footing that would set the course for the entire company. A completely new IT environment in Graz was to be created with HPE and Qumulo, independent from the existing Vexcel data center.

"Any company like Vexcel, which needs a powerful infrastructure for storage-intensive applications and Big Data analysis, won't find better than our Apollo and ProLiant servers—especially in combination with the Qumulo software," says Lukas Häckel, Service Provider Account Manager HPE Austria. Ingmar Löke, Director Sales DACH at Qumulo, is also convinced that, "With our software-defined complete solution, we bridge the gap between all systems in a hybrid HPE infrastructure, enabling seamless workflows and comprehensive control, thanks to real-time monitoring. All in all, it's a system made for the very specific needs of Vexcel."

In June 2019, the time had finally arrived to go live and following an intensive planning and testing phase, the new IT environment was set up in Graz. Since then, 10 HPE Apollo 4200 Gen10 Servers have been deployed in the cluster with current Intel® Xeon® processor technology and mixed-memory SSD/HDD architecture, via Qumulo 180 TB nodes and 30 HPE ProLiant DL360 Gen10 Servers. It's a complete system that promises Vexcel exactly the right balance between performance, capacity, and security.

> **"With this project, we have taken the first step on the road to our own digital transformation. Now we will do everything in our power to successfully continue along this path. I am convinced that we will succeed."**

– Christian Lackner, Head of IT, Vexcel Imaging

Customer at a glance

Solution

- HPE Apollo 4200 Gen10 Server
- HPE ProLiant 360 Gen10 Server
- Qumulo

Our solution partner

Qumulo

FOCUS ON SCALABILITY

Everything has been running smoothly since the new IT was installed. The data transfer of images from a camera after a flight to the new data center components works smoothly with fully professional archiving, providing reliable and secure access. Within a few hours of a flight, Vexcel customers have the images available for analysis.

But even though the new, own IT system is generously planned, IT manager Lackner expects it to reach its capacity limits as early as next year. "Our growth plans for this new business area are ambitious, as we are ourselves," he says, praising his Vexcel colleagues. Following the developments in Europe, the American, Australian, and Asian markets are to be opened up during 2020—increasing order volume and adding significantly more image data.

Lackner is not worried because he has taken the precaution of planning ahead. Right from the start, Vexcel was keen to set up the IT infrastructure not only securely and reliably but also to be as flexible as possible. Scalability was high on the wish list. "And that's what we got with HPE and Qumulo," he summarizes. As new capacities are required, they can be quickly and easily added to the existing infrastructure, without significant intervention in the overall system, or major additional effort.

With HPE and Qumulo, Vexcel has laid the foundations for further business success in the future. Now it is up to Vexcel's innovative approach to generate the successes of the future. Lackner acknowledges this, "With this project, we have taken the first step on the road to our own digital transformation. Now we will do everything in our power to successfully continue along this road. I am convinced that we will succeed."

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