i3D.net uses **WD Se™** drives

WD Se drives are an ideal solution for scale-out datacentres. They deliver a cost-effective combination of performance, capacity, and workload capability, while maintaining the hardiness of a true enterprise-class design.

“WD drives are a better price, they perform better, and we get better service.”

RICK SLOOT, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, i3D.NET
i3D.net is an international managed hosting and cloud service provider based in Rotterdam. The company was founded in 2004 and now operates more than 10,000 servers in 16 points of presence (PoPs) on six different continents. This award-winning growth has seen the company listed in the Deloitte Technology Fast 500 as the fastest-growing hosting company in the Benelux and win the FD Gouden Gazellen award as fastest-growing profitable company in 2009 to 2012.

Worldwide, the company has seen its network utilisation increase from 2.5Gbps in 2009 to 435 Gbps in 2015. The company had begun to expand rapidly by 2008. In the four years to 2012, it went from 1,000 servers to more than 8,000 servers. Chief Operating Officer, Rick Sloot, explains: “We suddenly found ourselves in a situation where we were beginning to purchase hard drives in quantities of hundreds at a time. When you gain volume in that way performance becomes essential.”

i3D.net had been using hard disk drives from various suppliers, as Rick describes: “We were busy growing and we had never really taken a close look at the failure rates of the multiple suppliers we used.”

By 2011, with an increased focus on drive performance, the i3D.net team realised that some of the drives they were using had a problematic ‘early failure’ rate. “It became clear that some of our existing suppliers had much higher failure rates than others,” says Rick, “and we needed to know whether we could lower the total failure rate.”

In its search for an alternative supplier, i3D.net began to audit its existing drives. Rick describes what his team discovered: “We realised that, compared to other suppliers, the WD drives were performing better.”

This discovery prompted i3D.net to begin a dialogue with WD. Rick says: “One of the things we love about WD is the fact we can speak with a Dutch account manager. Being able to contact sales and support in our native language, instead of trying to schedule conversation with people working in
different time zones, is a major plus for us. WD contacts us to keep us up to date with products and developments and we have access to advice when we need it.

“We trust the advice we get from WD. They know their own products. And we do appreciate the focus they have on product development. They are very specialised and we can see that from the amount they put into development – much more than their major competitors, many of whom have many different focuses, not just hard disks. WD are as specialised in their own line of work as we are in ours.”

Another aspect of WD’s service has impressed the i3D.net team, as Rick explains: “WD fulfils our orders quickly and these rapid delivery times help us to respond quickly to our customers. We know that we will be able to build to our customers’ specifications without suppliers holding us back – even for customers with largescale requirements.”

For i3D.net, it is important that WD’s helpful and responsive sales and customer service operations are matched by WD’s technical innovation.

“When you are running 10,000 servers, a 5% failure rate is equal to 1,250 failed hard disks annually,” says Rick. “We know that all drives have a failure rate, but our WD drives perform much better than this. They have an average annual failure rate that is way lower than our previous experience and is significantly lower than our minimum standard of 1%.”

With the amount of servers that i3D.net is running simultaneously, the annualised failure rate has an important impact on its overall reliability.

“Overall reliability is key in a performance-minded organization like i3D.net,” says Rick. “Not only is the improved performance of the WD drives helping us to lower our operating costs and helping us to improve our service levels for customers, it is also improving the message we can take to the market about our overall quality.”

As a result of the superior product and superior service i3D.net received from WD, it took the decision to swap to WD drives and, since 2012, i3D.net has standardised almost completely on WD drives.
“Whenever our customers want to increase capacity or require a new server solution, we can contact WD and get advice about which drive will be best suited for a particular application – whether that’s based on price per GB or total power usage per server. It all depends on what our customers need. WD has the breadth of products and the experience to help us deploy the best solution to meet our customer requirements,” says Rick.

For example, WD’s Se drives are designed for scale-out datacentre architectures and offer i3D.net a perfect combination of performance, capacity, and workload capability. The Se drives offer cost-effective enterprise-class storage that has been designed for large-scale datacentre replication environments running 24x7x365. These features make WD’s Se drives ideal for i3D.net’s global datacentre operations.

WD’s Re drives also have a place within the datacentre. With advanced technology that delivers consistent high performance in a multitude of applications, and with ten times the workload capability of desktop drives, WD Re is the workhorse of the WD’s datacentre portfolio.

WD Re is perfect for high-availability storage arrays that demand the most robust storage device available. High performance, capacity and reliability make WD Re ideal for data mining and high-performance computing.

“WD’s expertise and commitment to innovative product development enables us to fulfil our customers’ requirements in the best possible way,” says Rick. “We are really excited about WD’s Re+ drives. These use up to 50% less energy than the standard Re drives and this will allow us to focus on power reduction per petabyte of storage. We’re seeing a move towards kilowatt reduction being the most important key performance indicator in datacentre operation and WD has developed the technology we need to achieve significant reductions. WD’s commitment and focus on developing solutions that meet emerging demands is impressive.”

Rick concludes: “We’re pleased with our decision to standardise completely on WD drives. With WD we get a better price, better performance, and we get better service.”

For more information, please call WD: +44 (0)1372 366 000
For more information about i3D.net, please visit: i3D.net

Western Digital, WD and the WD logo are registered trademarks in the U.S. and other countries. WD Re Plus and WD Se are trademarks of Western Digital Technologies, Inc.

Other marks may be mentioned herein that belong to other companies. © 2015 WD, a Western Digital company. All rights reserved.

As used for storage capacity, one gigabyte (GB) = one billion bytes, and one terabyte (TB) = one trillion bytes. Total accessible capacity varies depending on operating environment. As used for transfer rate or interface, megabyte per second (MB/s) = one million bytes per second, and gigabit per second (Gb/s) = one billion bits per second.

www.wdc.com
2078-800021 May 2015