DELL Technologies

COMPUTERWORLD
FROM IDG

SMART SMALL BUSINESS

How modern data storage helps small businesses

Small businesses inevitably outgrow their IT investments. Even if the number of employees and customers remains stable, the volume of data generated will continue to multiply as all types of businesses become increasingly reliant on selling and using digital products and services.

The approximately six million small businesses in the UK far outnumber medium and large enterprises. Despite the impact of COVID-19 business disruptions, one 2021 survey reports that 66% of small (0-49 employees) and medium (50-250 employees) enterprises (SMEs) are expected to grow their businesses over the subsequent 12 months.

Data is essential for any size business. At minimum, it includes crucial information on customers, products and services. As companies evolve their information technology (IT) infrastructure and capabilities, they may turn to data analytics to help spot new business opportunities and resolve issues between supply and demand.

Technology market research firm IDC predicted the 2020 worldwide installed storage capacity would grow to 6.8 zettabytes (ZB), an increase of 16.6% over 2019. Through 2024, IDC projects a compound annual growth rate of 17.8% for the installed base of storage capacity.

From small retailers developing e-commerce capabilities to small services firms analysing streams of data to create unique insights, these organisations are learning how to use data to build their businesses. A small UK company today can develop a global business footprint, working with overseas customers and partners.

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COVID-19 compressed three years' worth of innovation into a time period of just three months. How UK small businesses take advantage of that leap in innovation depends in part on how well they are able to adapt to the rapid growth in data and their ability to leverage that data for competitive advantage.

Despite the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, an IDG global survey midway through 2020 found that 86% of IT decision-makers at companies with fewer than 100 employees expected their technology budgets to increase or stay the same over the following 12 months. The combined category of servers and storage was the technology area least impacted by COVID-era events; meanwhile, 65% of respondents indicated they were due for an upgrade or replacement, while 25% said they were making additional purchases that were not driven by recent events.

An earlier IDG survey, of companies in the UK, France and Germany with fewer than 100 employees, revealed that 54% say technology will play a major or significant role in reaching their top business goals. In that survey, IT systems represent the #2 investment priority, trailing improvements in products and services. The top barriers impeding investment in technology are return on investment and budgets (29%) and legacy IT and integration issues (17%).

A 2020 report by Be the Business concluded that UK companies are behind other developed countries in the adoption of technology, particularly with regard to small companies.

"The challenge in the UK is particularly acute among smaller businesses where not only are smaller businesses less likely to adopt technology than larger UK firms but they are significantly less likely than the smaller firms in other European countries," according to that report. But it also concluded that COVID-19 compressed three years' worth of innovation into a time period of just three months.

How UK small businesses take advantage of that leap in innovation depends in part on how well they are able to adapt to the rapid growth in data and their ability to leverage that data for competitive advantage.

Modern data storage platforms can help small businesses get the most out of their data cost-effectively.

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Changing storage requirements

Data is among the most valuable assets of any organisation. But small businesses generally have few IT employees, if any, to ensure that data is safe and secure. The fears of data loss and data unavailability are ever-present, as companies face the risk of costly outages, downtime, cyberattacks and other business setbacks.

During the COVID-19 disruptions, many small businesses were unable to keep their offices open, adding further challenges to storage management, with workers struggling to gain access to needed data while working from home or elsewhere. And with increasing regulation around data privacy, small businesses must also confront added challenges such as compliance and data sovereignty that previously pertained mostly to larger organisations.

Today, there are many storage options available to small businesses, but many companies often fear that switching from one system to another could be disruptive, particularly with regard to potential data loss. The lack of IT skills in-house also represents a hurdle for small businesses seeking to update and modernise their storage infrastructure.

Choosing the right storage solution can seem an overwhelming challenge as businesses try to estimate future storage needs. They must also make decisions regarding not only on-premises storage solutions but also key requirements such as encryption, backup, archiving and disaster recovery. Further complicating storage decision-making are the variety of cloud-based storage options that might be suitable and how or if to integrate those with on-premises solutions.

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At the heart of any storage decision is security. Small businesses are dealing with several risks associated with securing data: from hacking and other malicious attempts to mounting compliance concerns to address privacy mandated by internal policy and the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). It has become even more crucial for businesses to guard their data along with customer data and intellectual property (IP). Without proper protection, storage can be physically removed and forcefully hacked using readily available data retrieval schemes.

Business continuity capabilities are increasingly important as businesses rely more than ever on their IT environments for day-to-day operations. Too often, though, smaller businesses have viewed disaster recovery as a costly, low-priority option for future consideration. As such, if disaster strikes, those organisations do not have recovery solutions in place to quickly recover their data and continue business operations with minimum disruption.

While larger organisations represent bigger targets for criminal hackers, small businesses offer a greater number of potential targets and are often without the data security and threat detection defences of larger firms. One report by insurer Hiscox noted the growing proportion of small businesses reporting one or more cyberattack incidents, and that the mean cost of a single incident at a small firm tripled from $3,000 (approximately £2,158) in 2018 to $9,000 (£6,474) a year later. Industry surveys indicate that small businesses are the target of 43% of all cyberattacks.

The good news is that modern data storage platforms can help small business owners and IT managers to save time, to focus on what's really important to their business and ultimately unlock the value of their data.

43%

of all cyberattacks are targeted at SMEs and the mean cost of a single incident tripled from 2018 to 2019

The benefits of modern storage platforms

34%

of analytical queries are processed faster

30%

improved application performance

22%

reduced latency

While data may be the most valuable business asset, it is also among the most vulnerable. Without an appropriate strategy, the risks of data loss and data unavailability always linger, threatening costly outages, downtime, malware attacks and other business setbacks. But small businesses can readily take advantage of data protection features that safeguard on-premises data, such as automatic failover capabilities, multi-system replication, self-encrypting drives, data snapshots and clones.

Cost-effective, integrated and secure storage platforms provide the simplicity, agility, performance and cost control needed by small companies seeking assurance and business agility. These modern storage platforms empower the role of IT teams to that of enabler and innovator, rather than just as a cost centre. They are able to harness the power of data to optimise any workload and discover hidden value within that data. According to an IDC report, Dell storage customers were able to run analytical queries up to 34% faster, reduce latency by up to 22% and improve application performance by up to 30%.

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Why Dell Technologies?

Scalability, intelligence and cloud integration can help small businesses unlock the value of data. Dell Technologies' deep understanding of the IT environment, as the number one enterprise storage provider, provides small businesses with peace of mind and the ability to be able to expand storage on demand, adapt to business needs and intelligently manage data.

Storage solutions can be configured to meet any business-specific needs and accelerate critical workloads, from core to edge to cloud, while decreasing application outages and reducing storage requirements with deduplication features.

Dell storage families provide small businesses with the ability find the right fit for their needs and are available in a range of hard disk drives (HDDs), solid-state drives (SSDs) that utilise fast flash memory and hybrids that accommodate both. Configurations are available for any infrastructure needs, including direct-attached storage (DAS) and storage-area network (SAN) arrays; and network-attached storage (NAS) appliances.

Dell has teams of technical advisors that can help recommend the right storage solution to suit any budget or business need. Technical know-how for the right technical hardware.

Speak with a Dell Technologies Advisor:

Call **0800 085 4878** or **Chat**

They're also on **WhatsApp**

Find out more at **Dell.co.uk**

PowerVault ME4 Series systems support a variety of drive types and include enterprise-class all-inclusive software features. They are purpose-built and optimised for entry-level SAN and DAS environments. Designed for versatility, they can also easily add storage capacity to Dell PowerEdge Servers using PowerVault expansion enclosures.

Unity XT are All-Flash and Hybrid Flash arrays designed for performance, optimised for efficiency and built for hybrid cloud environments. These systems are suited for supporting demanding virtualised applications, deploying unified storage and addressing Remote office Branch office requirements. They set new standards for storage with compelling simplicity, all-inclusive software, blazing speed, optimised efficiency and multi-cloud enablement to meet the needs of resource-constrained IT professionals.

XtremIO X2 is a purpose-built all-flash array, designed to deliver on the promise of a simple, agile, scalable, fully-virtualised data center – all while minimising infrastructure footprint and TCO. It offers high performance with consistently low latency, unmatched storage efficiency and unprecedented management simplicity.

SC Series is built on a modern, automated architecture that proactively optimises data centres for cost-savings, while delivering transformational SSD, HDD or tiered performance. SC offers a 'federated' portfolio of all-flash and hybrid models, from affordable entry solutions to large arrays, to give companies of all sizes an enterprise-class technology advantage.

PowerMax combines the highest levels of on-premises performance and scalability with the agility and economics of cloud. Businesses can create cloud snapshot policies in seconds and securely ship them to their cloud of choice – AWS, Azure or Dell EMC ECS – for long-term retention or archive. End-to-end efficient encryption ensures data is secure while resources are optimised. Administrators can consolidate traditional and next-gen workloads and provision storage in under 30 seconds, utilising industry standard, end-to-end NVMe (Non-Volatile Memory Express) SSDs.

PowerFlex software-defined storage is designed to deliver flexibility, elasticity and simplicity with predictable performance and resiliency at scale. In addition to delivering high-performance block storage with rich data services, PowerFlex combines compute and high-performance storage resources in a managed unified fabric. PowerFlex is ideal for high-value databases and workloads, agile private cloud deployments and data centre consolidation.

PowerStore comprises a family of all-flash data storage appliances that eliminate traditional trade-offs in performance, scalability and storage efficiency. A single 2U appliance can provide business-enabling flexibility and help IT simplify and consolidate infrastructure.

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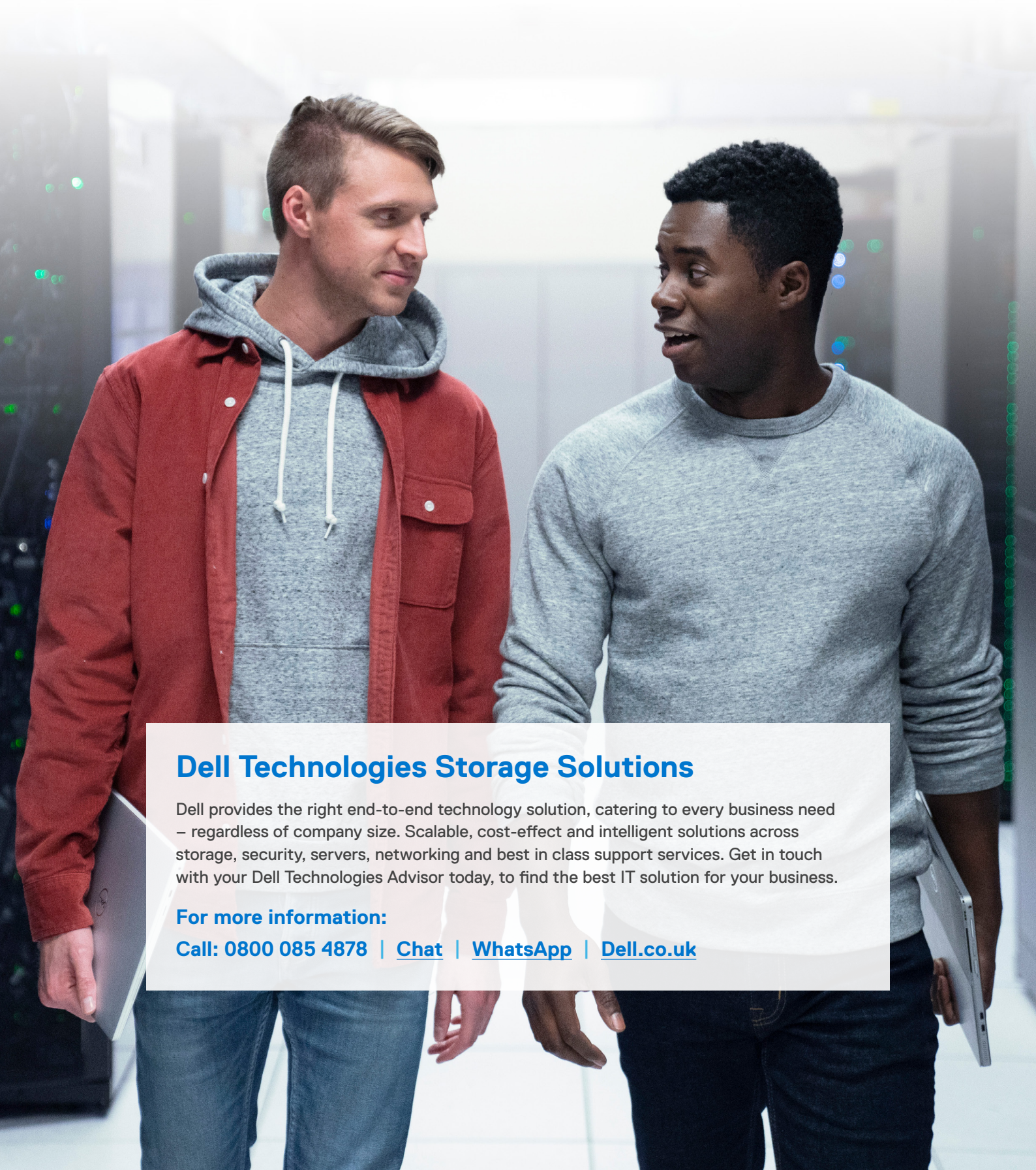

Dell Technologies Storage Solutions

Dell provides the right end-to-end technology solution, catering to every business need – regardless of company size. Scalable, cost-effect and intelligent solutions across storage, security, servers, networking and best in class support services. Get in touch with your Dell Technologies Advisor today, to find the best IT solution for your business.

For more information:

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