Egnyte Case Study

Earth Systems

"Despite our very limited IT resources, Egnyte helped build a LAN that extends thousands of miles enabling employees in Australia to work with our field personnel across five continents."

-Will Christopherson, IT Projects Officer

Though its largest office is in Melbourne, Australia, nearly half of Earth Systems' employees work in globally disparate regions. Six remote offices across Asia, Africa and North America need to collaborate with the team in Melbourne. Employees spend most of their time in the field, consulting on various projects in remote areas. A current project involves preparing an environmental and social impact assessment for a proposed gold mine in West Africa. Earth Systems has to work closely with clients and the local communities to ensure that environmental and social considerations are fully integrated into the design of the project. In order to do this, employees need to spend time in remote West African villages collecting environmental and social data for their client.

Small Business, Big File Management Needs

Will Christopherson, the IT Projects Officer, had the unenviable task of putting together a file sharing solution that would keep this global team humming. He had to balance numerous objectives. His 30+ employees in Melbourne were very capable scientists who had no interest in dealing with a big learning curve for new technologies. They were used to working on a local server before and understood a

HIGHLIGHTS

- Earth Systems connects teams from Australia to the rest of the globe working on environmental projects
- Local storage & Cloud work in concert to enable sharing large mapping files and images
- Teams work in remote areas with limited or unreliable internet access

COMPANY INFO

Earth Systems is a multidisciplinary environmental consulting and technology firm, with extensive experience in providing environmental, water, climate change and energy services and solutions. Founded in 1993, Earth Systems has successfully completed over 500 projects for a range of clients including government, private companies, aid and development agencies and research organizations.

mapped drive. Will had heard a lot about the cloud but the bandwidth he had in Melbourne precluded a cloud-only approach to file storage and access, especially since Earth Systems generates some large files. Employees work on large GIS mapping projects that can consist of hundreds layers on each map. Layers can be composed of hundreds of tiny files or a single huge image 5-20 GB in size. Many projects require Earth Systems employees to work in remote areas of Asia and Africa, and the sheer unpredictability of access in these remote areas is something that had to be considered. Christopherson needed to provide employees with a way to access those files when in the office or out on site.

He tried setting up solutions like Dropbox and Sugar Sync for employees to share files, but found they weren't built for a corporate environment. User management was a pain and Earth Systems needed a local solution that would integrate with their Active Directory. His next thought was to set up a server that would act as a host for offsite employees to remote into, but bandwidth limitations were too significant to overcome, security was a concern, and that solution would require more ongoing attention than he could afford to give.

Egnyte powers the 3000-mile LAN

Christopherson found Egnyte and liked the enterprise focus on security and permissions management as well as the ability to use local storage to access files in combination with the cloud. He deployed Egnyte on a Netgear NAS device in the Melbourne office so employees there would benefit from fast local access.

"The NAS lets me address my two main needs in Melbourne," Christopherson says. *"Users continue to work from a mapped drive at LAN speeds, on an interface they are used to. Additionally, I can keep the access local and have Egnyte sync efficiently to the cloud in the background without choking my network."*

Currently, employees working in remote countries have the desktop sync set up on their laptops. This ensures they can access all of their

> "Egnyte is a simple to use for users, but not overly simplified like Sugarsync or Dropbox. It's business oriented and has powerful features for me to manage the entire system, but it is easy for non-technical users to get connected and understand what is going on."

updated files from the cloud, but when they don't have connectivity they still have their files stored locally. This allows them to work on files in the field and sync files to the cloud when they get back to a connection. Christopherson plans to add another Netgear device in their Senegal office once the office grows in size. All this has helped Earth Systems establish a common repository of files and projects across the company, not despite the geographical separation of project teams.

Even though they aren't technical, employees are up and running on Egnyte almost immediately. Christopherson says, *"Egnyte is a simple to use for users, but not overly simplified like Sugarsync or Dropbox. It's business oriented and has powerful features for me to manage the entire system, but it is easy for non-technical users to get connected and understand what is going on."*

For Earth Systems, the cloud was not enough when out on remote sites, but the local plus cloud gives them secure, anytime access to their files.

TAKE THE NEXT STEP

Over 1 Billion files are shared daily by businesses using Egnyte. Egnyte provides the speed and security of local storage with the accessibility of the cloud. Users can easily store, share, access and backup files, while IT has the centralized administration and control to enforce business policies. Egnyte, founded in 2007, is based in Mountain View, California and is a privately held company backed by venture capital firms Google Ventures, Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers, Floodgate Fund, and Polaris Venture Partners. For more information, please visit www.egnyte.com or call 1-877-7EGNYTE.