

Success Story

QUICK FACTS

Industry/Solution:

- Energy; gas & electric utility

Platform/File System:

- Microsoft Windows 2003

Applications:

- Microsoft Exchange 2003
- Microsoft SQL Server 2005 and 2000

Partner Hardware:

- Dell and HP file servers
- HP StorageWorks 5000 Enterprise Virtual Arrays, HP StorageWorks 500 and 1000 Modular Smart Arrays
- Dell PowerVault MD300 Modular Disk Storage Arrays

Challenges:

- Full backups exceeded allowable window and impacted network performance
- File server restores required similar hardware or server replacements
- Search and retrieval of data for legal discovery and compliance was time-consuming and overburdened limited IT staff resources
- Mailbox sizes were growing out of control, which led to data protection and discovery problems

Competitive Challengers:

- Symantec NetBackup and Enterprise Vault
- HP DataProtector and RISS

Solution:

- CommVault® Simpana® Backup and Recovery and Archive software modules

Benefits:

- 50 percent improvement in backup speeds; restores now are nearly instantaneous
- Unified console for managing data protection, archive and migration has led to a 50 percent reduction in administrative overhead
- Easy, "Google like" end-user search and retrieval has dramatically improved service levels
- Streamlined mailbox management enables greater control and increased efficiencies
- Payback period: less than one year

Major Utility Company Powers Data Protection, Legal Discovery, Compliance and Storage Management with CommVault® Simpana® Backup and Recovery and Archive software

Customer Profile

A major utility company prides itself on a steadfast commitment to quality that ensures the company's products and services surpass customer expectations. To that end, the company continually embraces leading-edge technologies that bolster abilities to deliver safe heat, light and power while assuring adequate energy supplies and the lowest possible rates. Approximately 1,400 employees strive to provide excellent service from its headquarters in the Midwest, as well as five remote sites.

Data Management Environment

Streamlining data management is a top priority for the company's 30-person IT team that oversees core technology infrastructure, including approximately 50 clustered and standalone Microsoft servers, primarily running Windows 2003, SQL Server 2005 and 2000 as well as Microsoft Exchange 2003.

In addition to using Dell as its desktop platform, the company relies heavily on Dell and HP hardware to support file server and storage requirements. Specifically, HP StorageWorks 5000 Enterprise Virtual Arrays, HP StorageWorks 500 and 1000 Modular Smart Arrays and Dell PowerVault MD300 Modular Disk Storage Arrays house approximately 15 TBs of mission-critical data.

With CommVault's Simpana® software suite, the company leverages simplified, enterprise-class data protection for all file systems, applications and database systems. According to the Windows server administrator, backup

and recovery efforts have been streamlined dramatically as CommVault's Archive module has been instrumental in transforming his once reactive, interrupt-driven job into a proactive, strategic role. "CommVault's advanced archiving functionality has freed me from time-consuming and tedious search-and-restore efforts," he explains. "The ability to quickly find both active and historical information for legal discovery, compliance and regulatory requirements has lifted an enormous burden, allowing me to focus on new ways to optimize other aspects of our Windows environment. It also gives our legal, HR and internal auditing teams a big productivity boost, enabling them to dramatically improve eDiscovery response times by conducting the searches themselves."

Additionally, CommVault's Singular Information Management® approach provides them with the ability to perform a complete range of data management functions in a unified, streamlined manner for additional increases in productivity and operational efficiencies.

Fueling Data Protection With CommVault Backup & Recovery

The telltale signs that the company had outgrown its Symantec Veritas Backup Exec platform were backup windows that encroached into the production environment and slowed network performance. "People started complaining about sluggish network performance, which forced us to kill backup jobs before they were completed," recalls the Windows server administrator. "This became an unacceptable yet frequent practice."

Moreover, restores were often cumbersome and problematic. "We had a major server failure once and it took over a week to recover as we couldn't easily restore data on a different hardware platform," he adds. File recoveries often involved laborious tape cataloging, which overburdened the two people responsible for backups and restores.

To reduce backup windows and speed recovery, the company decided to step up to an enterprise-class solution and assessed the capabilities of various offerings, including CommVault's Backup and Recovery, Symantec's Veritas Net-Backup as well as backup and recovery software from HP. As a non-profit, cost was an important consideration in addition to reducing the overall administrative effort to manage backup jobs. "We wanted to spend our time on something other than double-checking backup jobs, finding tapes and scanning jobs," he notes.

In reviewing enterprise-class functionality and ease of use, CommVault's Backup and Recovery edged out the other options in terms of faster performance, trouble-free disaster recovery capabilities and much easier installation, configuration and management. In particular, the company finds CommVault's 1-Touch System Recovery a welcome improvement over previously manual server or workstation recoveries. "With 1-Touch, we can restore a failed server in less than three hours—a big improvement over our previous week-long or more process. Additionally, CommVault software lets us restore data to dissimilar hardware or a virtual machine, so there's no time lag for replacement systems."

They now complete more backup jobs in less time while alleviating the previous burden of backup and recovery administration. "Backups now are 50 percent faster, disk-based restores are nearly instantaneous and web-based management lets us oversee operations from anywhere," he adds.

Getting Control of Mailbox Sizes and Legal Discovery

With CommVault Backup and Recovery in place, the company focused on instituting controls for managing unruly mailbox sizes as well as responding to ever-increasing requests for legal discovery and compliance. In keeping with best practices recommended for Sarbanes-Oxley (SOX) compliance, they developed procedures for reproducing up to five years of operational, financial, customer and personnel data. Over time, however, it became more difficult to provide data in a timely fashion to internal legal and HR teams as well as external auditors. "Going back and cataloging tapes to find the requested data could take several hours a day for up to two weeks just to field one request," he recalls. "Each department had slightly different needs and accommodating all requests, especially for e-mails, became exceedingly hard." This time-consuming and laborious method for responding to discovery requests also exposed the organization to unnecessary risks.

An exponential increase in mailbox sizes further compounded compliance and discovery challenges. Traditionally, the largest mailboxes consumed 1 GB of disk space, but as employees began saving more e-mails, mailbox sizes mushroomed to 4 GB or more, impacting Exchange server performance while also exacerbating compliance and discovery delays. The company even began

experiencing problems with its BlackBerry server once the 1 GB mailbox size recommendation was exceeded.

While attending Microsoft's Tech Ed 2006, the company learned about CommVault software's expanded archiving and data migration functionality. As part of a competitive RFP process, they assessed CommVault software in comparison with archiving and storage management solutions by HP and Symantec Veritas. Once again, CommVault offered the most compelling economic value proposition. CommVault's Simpana software merges search and discovery with enterprise data management in a single suite, making it easier to extract business value across multiple storage tiers. According to the Windows system administrator, the company was confident this single-platform approach would drive further operational improvements, leading to lower total cost of ownership (TCO).

The deal clincher, however, was CommVault's web-based, self-service searching feature, which let legal staff and auditors perform their own search and discovery of indexed information across all data types and repositories, including online and offline data, archives and backups. "Our legal team was excited to do their own searches and get much faster discovery results," he notes. "For me, the deciding factor was having one place for managing all our data protection and compliance requirements along with mailbox message growth."

High-Octane Mailbox Management, Legal Discovery and Compliance

In July 2007, the company upgraded to CommVault's next-generation software suite, Simpana, to take advantage of fully

integrated search, discovery and data management capabilities. The company currently is defining policies, using CommVault's unified console, to determine how to archive incoming and outgoing messages and attachments. Archiving historical e-mails for the past five years is a significant undertaking, which requires retrieving PST files for all users. Still, the anticipated benefits are substantial.

In the near future, legal staff and internal auditors will be able to search and retrieve messages and attachments from the archive without any IT intervention. Additionally, they can leverage Content Indexing functionality for the highest levels of efficient, universal search and retrieval. "CommVault's end-user search and retrieval is as easy as a Google search," he explains. "It's a complete win-win: discovery requests are expedited and IT bottlenecks are eliminated. We can take the 40 hours it used to take locating the requested data and focus on more strategic corporate IT initiatives."

Among those efforts are improvements in managing storage growth and costs as a result of migrating data off several vital file servers. To date, the company has moved 600 GBs from one file server while shaving about 400 GBs off another for increased storage management and faster backups. For additional storage management gains, they hope to add CommVault's Single Instance Store (SIS) capability, which reduces the duplicate copies of data stored on disk using deduplication technology. "Disk space is king in our world," he adds. "In 2008, we expect to incorporate this capability so we can retain more data on disk and further optimize storage capacity for backup data. What's more, we'll be able to use our existing disk resources to gain immediate SIS benefits without having to change or augment our hardware infrastructure. Instead of buying more hardware, we'll just leverage smarter software to address evolving business requirements."

Since upgrading to Simpana 7.0, the company has achieved breakthrough improvements in backup, recovery, legal discovery, compliance and mailbox management. The results are a 50 percent reduction in administrative overhead and a reliable audit trail. "We have complete faith in our ability to protect our environment and respond to legal discovery and compliance needs," he concludes. "CommVault's singular approach to data and information management delivers a lot of value—enabling us to project ROI in less than a year in terms of lowered administrative overhead, faster backups and restores, more proactive support and reduced data protection costs."



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