

AISWA Slashes Disaster Recovery from Days to Minutes

QUICK FACTS

Industry/Solution:

- Education

Platform/File System:

- Microsoft Windows

Applications:

- Microsoft SharePoint Portal Server
- Microsoft SQL Server

Solution:

- CommVault Galaxy Backup & Recovery

Customer Profile

The Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia (AISWA) is the peak body representing Independent Schools in Western Australia. AISWA was established in 1962 as a non-profit organisation to support, represent and promote the interests of Independent Schools.

AISWA's constituent members include almost one hundred and forty Independent Schools. Its member schools educate over 50,000 students and employ 3,500 teaching and over 1000 non-teaching staff.

The Problem

Nine months ago, AISWA's IT Manager, Manjitha De Alwis, implemented a disaster recovery exercise to formulate a process to see how quickly AISWA could recover information. During the exercise, De Alwis found that the existing system could take 2 to 5 days to recover lost data - this was unacceptable to the AISWA.

"AISWA provides IT infrastructure for 30 mobile users, who are consultants skilled in particular education fields, who work directly with schools often at the school site. To say to them and AISWA internal staff that it would take me two to three days to recover missing files was undesirable," said Manjitha De Alwis, IT Manager AISWA.

As a result, De Alwis began the process of looking for a replacement to the association's existing Veritas system.

"The first step was to consult IT Managers from various independent schools throughout Australia to review the effectiveness of the solutions they were using. This gave us a clear picture of what has worked well and what hurdles we may face," said Mr. De Alwis.

One of the core business applications the AISWA uses is Microsoft SharePoint Portal Server (SPS) 2003 for its corporate intranet as well as the primary document store. Through research, and discussions with vendors AISWA discovered that only one product in the market offered the ability to integrate closely with SPS and to restore files on a granular level.

The final step that De Alwis took in the evaluation process was a product/vendor evaluation which compared factors such as functionality, on-going support and ease of implementation.

The Solution

The AISWA needed to be able to provide disaster recovery of over 10,000 extremely private and confidential documents that are used by staff that work across 35 notebooks, 25 desktops and 7 servers.

"When looking for a replacement we required a solution that not only enabled us to do mass restores, but a granular restore of specific documents," said De Alwis. "The advantage of a granular restore is that there is minimal down time for the network resulting in nominal disruption for users."

After investigating the products available on the market and talking to industry colleagues, De Alwis recommended that CommVault be considered as the product of choice because of its speed and granularity of recovery, ease of use, minimal disruption to the existing IT system and its ability to support internal and external applications.

"At first I was hesitant to move to a newer product on the market, compared to a solution that was mature and more established. However, after researching further, I discovered

that CommVault had a loyal and growing customer base. Knowing that CommVault was backed by Microsoft was an additional reassuring proof point."

The implementation process was fast and within three weeks the AISWA was up and running with its new solution.

The Results

Within six months of the implementation the AISWA faced its first real-life disaster recovery and the first major test for CommVault Galaxy.

"A consultant was attempting to organise his network files remotely and accidentally lost 70 important documents. The consultant contacted the IT department, advised what had happened and within 5 minutes we had recovered the missing files and returned them to the correct location.

"To do this previously, we would have required another server to extract the information to separate the databases, then use the slow tape drive to recover the back-up (Using CommVault has now allowed AISWA to eliminate tape). This whole process would have taken two to three days."

The process, using CommVault, now involves using a disk-to-disk-to-tape strategy which has greatly reduced the backup window for critical data.

Discussing the ROI of the new CommVault system, De Alwis stated, "Since implementation we've had three disaster recovery situations and the CommVault solution has enabled us to recover the missing documents with minutes each time - as far as I'm concerned, it has paid for itself."

De Alwis added, "It is too early to put an exact ROI on the solution, but the cost to keep the original Veritas system and not being able to recover documents in a timely manner is a good ROI for the AISWA management."

At this time AISWA only uses CommVault for disaster recovery, but over the next 12 months, when contract with other suppliers expires, the organisation will look at implementing other CommVault solutions.

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