

Wire Belt deploys Actifio's Protection and Availability Storage to simplify data protection

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Wire Belt, a manufacturer of conveyor systems and belts used in the snack and poultry industry and headquartered in Londonderry, N.H., was facing a multitude of problems with their backup and data protection infrastructure. Their backups were not completing in the time allowed and the amount of data that needed to be backed up and protected was growing. Add to that that half their backups failed to complete, that they had no way or time to verify whether tape backups were even good and that the company had no reliable and secure way to get tapes offsite for disaster recovery and business continuity.

The problem

Wire Belt was experiencing the same troubles many organizations do in enabling data protection applications and disaster recovery across a wide-area network (WAN). The amount of data and the number of copies of data the company had were simply out-of control.

The company was unable to meet its backup windows, it had lost productivity for its two IT administrators as they struggled to complete unsuccessful backups and they had virtually no disaster recovery plan.

"The problems just kept stacking up," says Jason Axne, system administrator for Wire Belt. "The biggest problems we were having was time. Time is the enemy in all our backup routines. We're also running out of space. We literally couldn't produce a backup in 24-hours."

Axne had come into the company where he first virtualized their four physical servers with a total of 30 VMware virtual machines, implemented a virtual desktop infrastructure and deployed an email archiving solution. But, when he looked at the data protection architecture Wire Belt was using, what he saw was a shambles.

"Essentially when we virtualized [our servers], everything became so much faster, we were trying to leverage that speed with the reliability and efficiency of VMware. We needed something to leverage our virtual infrastructure and we really needed a comprehensive data management solution."

"All of the engineering files we create with our manufacturing process] are massive, we have a lot of intellectual property [that needs to be protected]," says Axne.

Wire Belt had relied on Symantec's Backup Exec to backup data to what Axne calls a 'staging disk.' Once the data was saved to disk, it was then backed up to tape, which was transported offsite on a somewhat haphazard basis. Other than shuttling data offsite for disaster recovery and business continuity, there was no replication taking place and essentially no other comprehensive DR/BC plan.

"We felt that we not only had to back [data] up, but store it offsite somewhere so that it can be accessible in a disaster recovery scenario."

Axne was also running out of space on his EqualLogic SAN. He did snapshots of the SAN data, but had no place to back them up. The amount of storage space taken for the snapshots was not insignificant – it amounted to almost a third of the capacity of the SAN. To create enough space to backup his snapshots, he would have had to buy another 5TB SAN array.

The solution

In February of this year, Axne deployed Actifio's Protection and Availability Storage (PAS) data protection solution and appliance. He installed a pair of Actifio's appliance for redundancy. Once the Actifio PAS was up and running, Wire Belt was able to dispense with their backup software, the backup server and all the licenses that went with it.

Now, Wire Belt is able to backup all their servers three times a day, their backup window has been eliminated and they are able to replicate data to a remote co-location site every hour for business continuity purposes. To save on WAN bandwidth, Axne uses Actifio's built-in deduplication software.

A few weeks ago, a vendor came into Axne's shop and inadvertently corrupted their production SQL database that belonged to their ERP system. "All our production data went up in smoke. With Actifio we were able to spin up a snapshot and recover that database within five minutes."

The benefit

Wire Belt received all sorts of benefits from deploying Actifio and Axne describes them best:

- "To me, Actifio is the best of all solutions. I don't have to worry so much [about backups and data protection]."
- "We weren't backing up our snapshots from the EqualLogic SAN because we didn't have any space. With Actifio, we no longer have to purchase another [EqualLogic] SAN. We don't have to purchase another backup server. We don't have to worry about an off-site data replication solution. It's all combined into one package."
- "Now, with Actifio we backup every one of the servers three times a day. Our backup window has gone away."
- "For recovering data, we no longer need to worry about it. We can recover a server within five minutes."

That about says it all , except one last thing – "We needed a comprehensive data management solution and Actifio was the best of all worlds. – Jason Axne, Wire Belt.

Market survey

Actifio's Protection and Availability Suite (PAS) represents a unique solution to the problem of growing data and copies of data.

Recent studies have shown that enterprise primary data storage requirements are growing at an annual rate of 35% to 65%. Even more dramatic is the growth of secondary and tertiary data -- also known as copy data. Copies of data are made and retained for multiple purposes, including restoration of deleted or corrupted files, recovery of entire systems in cases of system failure and off-site storage for disaster recovery and business continuity. Copies of data are made to support applications such as CRM, ERP and business intelligence. Copies of data are produced for testing and development, archiving and compliance. All this copy data multiplies like rabbits, creating havoc for those attempting to manage the data explosion. In fact, it is not uncommon for the cost of managing and maintaining copy data to be three to five times the cost of managing and maintaining primary data.

In all but the most homogeneous environments these multiple types of data copies are kept in separate and distinct data silos, at least logically if not physically. They are created and managed by different applications, with separate silos for backup, snapshots, virtual machine images and archival storage. In addition to the additional system and software costs to manage these multiple storage silos, each system requires IT staff time – you will see database admins, application administrators, server admins and storage specialists all managing the data within their domain and doing so at an overwhelming cost to their organization.

All applications for copy data management have four things in common – they all copy, store, move and restore data in some form. In addition, each application makes an independent copy of data, stores that data in its own defined location and then retains the data for a defined period of time or until it is manually deleted.

Actifio's approach is to combine these multiple data silos and the functions of multiple data protection systems to deliver protection for all data using a single application. With a single data silo, the company addresses data protection, disaster recovery, business continuity, archiving and other copy data requirements for all protected systems and applications.