



Fishburns

Fishburns Solicitors implemented a PlateSpin Forge[®] appliance from Novell to increase the speed and reliability of its disaster recovery capabilities. The Novell[®] solution enables the recovery of all servers within two hours of a disaster, and allows Fishburns to test data and server recovery at any time, giving the company and its clients full confidence.

Overview

Fishburns is one of the foremost professional indemnity practices in the UK, and has been providing legal services to the insurance industry for over 30 years. Based in the City of London and with offices in Dublin, Fishburns acts for many of the leading insurers and reinsurers in the London market and beyond. The company employs both experienced lawyers and insurance professionals from across the industry.

Challenge

Fishburns had a conventional disaster recovery plan: the company was backing up all data to tape, then regularly moving the tapes to a secure offsite location. While adequate in terms of protecting critical company and client data against loss, this approach had two major drawbacks.

First, restoring from tape was slow and required significant manual effort and expertise. To recover just one of its servers, Fishburns needed to re-build the operating system, then restore the data itself.

Second, the effort and disruption involved made it difficult to test the recovery procedure. Fishburns was confident that all data was protected, but not that it could recover rapidly enough to avoid business disruption in the event of a disaster.

Keen to demonstrate a high level of contingency planning to major clients, Fishburns looked for a disaster recovery appliance that would offer extremely rapid restores and the ability to test recovery at low cost.

Solution

Fishburns approached its long-term IT services provider, Trans European Technology (TET), which recommended PlateSpin Forge from Novell. A fully virtualised recovery hardware appliance, PlateSpin Forge takes regular snapshots of live server workloads and enables them to run on its own hardware in the event of unplanned downtime.

As Fishburns was also planning to refresh its Storage Area Network (SAN), it decided to re-use the old SAN hardware alongside the PlateSpin Forge appliance at its disaster recovery site. TET implemented and tested the solution at Fishburns' head office, then moved both the appliance and the SAN to a co-located facility. The PlateSpin Forge appliance is protecting three critical systems at Fishburns, spanning a total of nine physical servers, taking an incremental snapshot every 24 hours.

"TET did an excellent job setting up PlateSpin Forge—the in-depth technical knowledge of their consultants is highly impressive," said Alan Budd, IT Director, Fishburns Solicitors.

Fishburns at a glance:

Leading UK professional indemnity practice

■ Industry:

Legal

■ Location:

UK

■ Products and Services:

PlateSpin Forge

■ Results:

- *Provided reliable, fully testable, low-maintenance disaster recovery solution*
- *Cut recovery time for all nine servers to just two hours*
- *Enabled recovery from a total disaster at the main site within just 36 hours*

"In place of a largely manual recovery process with significant unknowns, the PlateSpin solution gives us fully repeatable, highly automated recovery within known and tested timescales."

Alan Budd

*IT Director
Fishburns Solicitors*

“The PlateSpin Forge appliance enables us to demonstrate a very high level of disaster recovery capability to our clients. As industry regulation grows, our clients can be confident in our reliability as a business partner.”

Alan Budd
IT Director
Fishburns Solicitors

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“The key benefit of the solution is the confidence it provides that we can be back up and running quickly in the event of a server failure. This comes largely from the ability to test the recovery capability whenever we want.”

Maintaining effective communications with clients is essential for Fishburns, and one of the three key systems protected on PlateSpin Forge is its Microsoft* Exchange e-mail server. The solution also mirrors a large Interwoven document management system and an internal accounts systems.

“The PlateSpin Forge appliance enables us to demonstrate a very high level of disaster recovery capability to our clients,” said Budd. “As industry regulation grows, our clients can be confident in our reliability as a business partner. What’s more, the Novell solution removes a significant amount of the time and effort we previously spent on testing our disaster recovery process.”

Results

By implementing a PlateSpin Forge appliance, Fishburns achieved its primary objectives: increasing the speed and reliability of server recovery, and simultaneously reducing its administrative burden. The Novell solution provides a user-friendly front-end for managing replication schedules and performing

tests, providing confidence that all systems can be back up and running within two hours of a complete disaster.

“PlateSpin Forge enables us to perform a full test of all the servers at our DR site whenever we like, with almost zero administrative effort,” said Budd. “The only difference between these tests and a real DR scenario is that we don’t actually re-direct users to the appliance—so we have complete confidence that the solution will work when we need it to.”

Including the time taken to relocate staff to rented offices, Fishburns estimates that recovery to normal operations would take just 36 hours in the event of a total disaster at the primary site. This compares very favourably with the estimated 10 days required with the previous technology.

“In addition to significantly decreasing our risk and ensuring that we can continue to provide almost uninterrupted client service in the event of a disaster, PlateSpin Forge gives us much greater control and confidence over backup and recovery,” said Budd. “In place of a largely manual recovery process with significant unknowns, the Novell solution gives us fully repeatable, highly automated recovery within known and tested timescales.”



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