

An Hour Saved Can Mean Thousands of Dollars Earned at Australia's Largest Fresh Fruit Juice Company

What a difference an hour can make. That's about the amount of time it takes each night to perform a tape save of business-critical application data at Berri Ltd, Australia's largest fresh juice producer.

Most of Berri Ltd's seven production plants operate 24x7, and thanks to Echo² High Availability software, users no longer need to stop entering transactions in the JD Edwards (now PeopleSoft) One World application during the daily tape save hour. But this wasn't always the case. For years, standard operating procedure was to end all key applications running on the iSeries for about an hour in the middle of the night to perform the daily backup of critical data. Of course, all connected scanning and printing systems could not be used during this time. To get around this, just prior to the downtime hour, employees would make estimates of the number of pallets of finished product that were expected to be produced, and would then manually pre-print and scan the requisite labels to prerecord the inventory. During the downtime, employees would also need to write down any transfers of inventory that occurred and then manually record the information once the system came back online. It wasn't unusual for these manual processes to cause problems.

Says George Despinoudis, Technical Support Manager for Berri Ltd, "If there was any halt in juice production during the backup period, transactions would have to be tracked manually and then reversed. Sometimes this would happen accurately, and sometimes not. If there was a hitch, it could easily turn into thousands of dollars of wasted time." He continues, "The loss of productivity would usually show up during the morning shift when staff would have to run around and try to determine why inventory numbers got thrown off during the night shift."

The IT team at Berri Ltd. knew that something had to be done to eliminate this potentially expensive hour of downtime, and they discovered that high availability

software could easily solve the problem by replicating application data to a separate logical partition (LPAR) on their same iSeries. Tape saves could then be performed over this replicated environment, all without causing interruption to the live production processes. With that, George and his other IT peers set about evaluating high availability software products.

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"We looked at the high availability software of the three more well-known vendors but were immediately deterred by the initial cost of the product," says George. "And it wasn't just the cost of the software; it was also the other ongoing costs of annual maintenance fees and especially the many hours of manpower it appeared would be required to manage the software."

About Berri Ltd.

Berri Ltd is Australia's largest fruit juice manufacturer and one of the nation's leading beverage producers, with an annual revenue of approximately AUS \$600 million. The company juices 130,000 tonnes (287,000,000 lbs) of fresh citrus fruit annually, operates from eleven separate locations across Australia, and employs about 1,100 people.

Berri is also the leading imported juice brand in a number of overseas countries and is now stocked on supermarket shelves from Jakarta to Vancouver.

iTera Case Study: Echo² High Availability at Berri Ltd.

During a JD Edwards user group conference (Quest Global) in Denver, Colorado, Ross Bradley, Berri's Information Systems Director, happened by the iTera booth and was surprised to discover an HA vendor that he didn't know about. He quickly learned that the price of iTera's Echo² High Availability software was about half of the other software brands that Berri Ltd. had previously evaluated. Upon further inquiry, it appeared that Echo² would also take considerably less time to monitor and manage than other products on the market. Once back in Melbourne, and after making a thorough evaluation of the product and the company, Berri Ltd. purchased Echo².

Before installation, additional disk capacity was added to the iSeries model 820 located at the Berri Ltd. data center in Melbourne to accommodate the duplicate environment, and then an LPAR was created to serve as the backup environment. The installation and configuration process of Echo² was actually simple enough to be done remotely on both of Berri's production and backup environments by an iTera installer located in the United States. In a little more than a day, and without causing any downtime, the installation was completed and data was replicating to the backup environment.

Soon after, George came to iTera's offices in Salt Lake City where he was thoroughly trained on the product using Berri Ltd.'s own data, again, accessed remotely. During the training process, several configuration tweaks were made to optimize replication for his environments.

Upon returning home, George audited the replicated data to verify that everything was being accurately mirrored. He was satisfied enough with the results to begin the first daily tape save on the backup environment, which was entirely successful. Best of all, the save was done without causing even a moment of downtime on the production environment. Says George happily, "Echo² clearly paid for itself within a short time of doing tape saves over the replicated backup environment."

All that is needed to perform tape saves on the replicated data is to suspend the Echo² "apply jobs" in the backup environment. These apply jobs take the data changes from journal entries and update necessary objects on the backup environment. While these jobs are suspended, journaling continues to accumulate data-change information on the production environment. Once the tape save is complete, the

apply jobs are then restarted, which quickly brings data files and other objects back into synchronization.

George finds that monitoring and managing the software is a simple, straightforward task: "It's not a major effort every day to manage the product and verify that everything is running smoothly and objects are in sync. I don't think we are even spending half an hour each day." George illustrates how simple it is to use the monitor: "At one point when I had to leave town for a few days, I showed my network administrator what to keep an eye on in the Echo² system monitor. Because it is so intuitive, within just five minutes he understood exactly what he needed to watch. Sure, in just five minutes he didn't know how to perform corrective tasks, but he knew he could determine if anything in the replication process was out of order so I could be alerted."

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"Support has also been great," George adds. "There have been times when we have sent an email to log a problem at what would be a very late hour at iTera's offices, and half an hour later we received a phone call or a return email with an answer."

Doing tape saves over the backup environment is actually the first phase of Berri Ltd.'s high availability initiative. The second phase, to begin soon, will replicate data and other critical objects to a second iSeries located offsite. This will enable switchover and failover capabilities in order to move the company closer to full continuous availability protection. Toward this end, George and his colleagues are in the process of acquiring a new model 810 to act as the offsite backup machine. This machine will initially be located in Berri Ltd.'s data center in Melbourne where the two-system replication process can be configured and tested. The backup machine will then be moved offsite to the data center of their telecommunication provider, with both machines connected by high-speed line.

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