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Waleed Dashqooni, server infrastructure assistant manager, BISB

## Business Profile

Company Name:  
Bahrain Islamic Bank

Headquarters:  
Bahrain

Industry:  
Banking

Business Overview:  
Bahrain Islamic Bank was established in 1979 as the first Islamic commercial bank in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The Bank maintains a leading position in the Islamic banking sector by adopting innovative Islamic investment and financing products alongside its corporate and retail banking services

Business Environment:

- BISB manages assets worth more than 874 million Bahraini Dinars
- The Bank has 13 local branches, as well as 48 ATMs

Vision Solutions Product:  
Double-Take Availability

Implementation Team:  
BISB, Vision Solutions

## Critical issue

Bahrain Islamic Bank (BISB) is one of the leading banks in Bahrain. It provides retail and corporate banking services to customers in the Kingdom. As part of its service offerings, BISB offers internet and e-banking services, as well as through its branches and ATM network. In order to protect its critical data as well as ensure availability of its internet-based services, BISB required a full business continuity and disaster recovery solution.

## Results

- Recovery time has been reduced
- In the unlikely event of a failure, internet banking services can be up and running again
- Cost effective platform for disaster recovery is in place, using virtualization to reduce costs

## Technologies

- Double-Take Availability
- Internet and e-banking systems, as well as internal applications, all running on Windows Server windows 2003 and 2008
- Microsoft Hyper-V at disaster recovery site
- HP server hardware

## Business Challenge

As the leading Islamic banking institution in the Kingdom, Bahrain Islamic Bank (BISB) prides itself on meeting the needs of its customers for Sharia'a compliant financial products. Founded in 1979, the Bank has more than 30 years of experience in delivering services that customers are looking for, as well as using innovative approaches to expand its market opportunities.

As part of this approach, BISB has dedicated Internet and e-banking channels for its customers to use for managing their money and assets alongside more traditional channels such as branch offices and ATMs. However, delivering these services using the Internet meant that the Bank had to look again at its approach to disaster recovery.

"Customers are used to services being available during office hours from a branch, but they demand access around the clock when these services are available online", commented Waleed Dashqooni, server infrastructure assistant manager at BISB. "Making sure that these services were protected against downtime was therefore a key consideration as part of our overall business continuity program. This drove us to evaluate how we protected our applications in general, as well as how we would recover in the unlikely event of a failure."



## Solution

The BISB IT team, led by Mr. Dasqooni, began to evaluate solutions and approaches to protecting the banking applications. Critical to the success of this project was the ability to move data as it was created over to a secondary location in real time, while any solution evaluated would have to work in low bandwidth conditions. Another consideration was how to ensure that the implementation was cost-effective.

“Virtualisation was a technology that we wanted to take advantage of in this implementation—using this allowed us to reduce the number of servers that we had to implement at the disaster recovery site,” explained Mr. Dashqooni. “However, all our primary applications would remain on their existing physical servers, so any solution that we considered had to support both physical and virtual servers.”

Mr. Dashqooni chose Double-Take Availability for its ability to replicate data in real-time from the primary servers over to the secondary site. Double-Take Availability works at the byte-level, so after the initial set-up, only changes to files or documents are replicated over. This approach not only ensures that the protected data is as up to date as possible, but that it can work across a WAN environment that can be low in available bandwidth.

As part of the second site implementation, BISB also chose to use Microsoft’s Hyper-V virtualisation product to host its secondary servers. This meant that the cost of the overall project was reduced compared to using either other virtualisation platforms or stand-alone physical servers. “Microsoft Hyper-V complemented our choice of Double-Take Availability, letting us reduce our requirement for hardware at the second site while still benefiting from the real-time data replication benefits that we required,” said Mr. Dashqooni.

BISB implemented Double-Take Availability to protect 13 physical servers, with data from the applications hosted on these machines replicated in real-time across to the secondary location. The two sites are connected by a MPLS link, with the distance between them being 4 km.

BISB now has a full DR solution in place for its internet banking and business applications. Double-Take Availability replicates data changes as they take place in real time across to the secondary site, and in the event of a failure, these applications can be up and running in minutes. “With Double-Take Availability, we do not have to worry about our applications and customer data being protected: the data is moved over in real-time, so we can be sure that we always have the latest version of any documents or data. If a server supporting one of our applications does fail, the replacement at the remote site can have users directed over to it automatically. This means that we can meet our recovery time objectives and have applications available,” said Mr. Dashqooni.

The biggest benefit for BISB is that it now has a cost-effective DR platform in place for its critical applications. The Bank is now planning to support more applications with Double-Take Availability as the need to protect them arises. “The ability to protect data across multiple applications and platforms is valuable to us. We are looking at more applications where availability is required for either users within the business, or for our external customers, and adding these to our DR strategy using Double-Take Availability,” commented Mr. Dashqooni.



15300 Barranca Parkway, Irvine, CA 92618  
1-800-957-4511 ▪ 1-801-799-0300 ▪ visionsolutions.com



High Availability Disaster Recovery Systems and Data Management