



"We wanted to improve our business continuity plan and reduce the potential window of downtime that would be incurred as part of a disaster. Working with Frontier Technology, we now have a service that allows us to protect our critical applications and have them back up and running in less than thirty minutes. At the same time, we have reduced our IT management headaches, and can provide our staff with more flexibility around how they work."

Andrew Hough, IT Manager, Hampden Group

Business Profile

Company Name:
Hampden Group

Headquarters:
London, UK

Industry:
Insurance

Business Environment:

- Provides administration and claims processing services to the insurance industry
- Covered by Financial Services Authority rules on business continuity
- Has a total of 1,193 Lloyd's Members and is the largest adviser to private capital at Lloyd's of London with members providing over £1.77 billion of underwriting capacity to the Lloyd's Market for 2011.

Vision Solutions Product:
Double-Take Availability

Implementation Team:
Frontier Technology

Critical issue

The company required an update to its business continuity plan that could meet its requirements for real-time data protection, reduced recovery time objectives and simplified management. Support for virtual and physical server platforms was also required.

Results

- Meets the compulsory business continuity and recovery requirements as required by the FSA
- Provides real-time replication and protection of company data
- Ensures company can meet recovery time objective around its critical applications of less than 30 minutes
- Protection is provided as a service, so no management overhead incurred or second site required

Technologies

- Double-Take Availability as part of Frontier Technology cloud DR service, Frontier Continuity Service

Business Challenge

Hampden Group has provided management and services to the insurance sector for more than 30 years. As part of one of the largest insurance markets in the world, Lloyd's of London, the company advises over a thousand Lloyds Members. During the late 1990s, the group diversified into providing Members' agency services and, through strategic acquisitions and product development, has become the largest provider of Members' agency services.

As part of its services to its clients, the company relies on electronic communication channels as well as more traditional methods. Email and mobile access to data are business requirements as part of providing the service levels that clients expect. The company is also regulated by the Financial Services Authority, which requires organizations to have a full business continuity plan in place to cover any incidents that might affect their ability to function.

Hampden's board decided to look at ways that its existing business continuity plan could be improved in order to reflect the changing market demands and its own business needs. Andrew Hough, IT manager at Hampden Group, was the person responsible for all IT and networking at the company and headed up this project.

"Our previous business continuity strategy was based on tape. While this was a valid approach for the time that it had first been put in, the 48 hour back up window was no longer acceptable. We needed to have our critical applications back up within the hour," explained Hough. "We also wanted to see how we could improve working practices for our staff as part of the process by providing remote access to applications where possible."



Solution

The company had a range of applications and servers that it wanted to protect, including the company's email servers based on Microsoft Exchange and BlackBerry Enterprise Server, critical CRM and database servers, as well as its authentication and remote access systems based on Citrix technologies, and finally file servers hosting essential business information.

Hampden Group set out to evaluate alternative approaches to business continuity that would help to cut the potential window of downtime, as well as streamline the management processes associated with protecting the company's data and applications. Having reviewed competitive tenders, Hough opted to use Frontier Technology's Continuity Service, which is based on Double-Take Availability and its bespoke framework for business continuity. Frontier Technology is a premier systems integrator and cloud computing provider, specializing in business continuity, data access, IT infrastructure and data management solutions.

Double-Take Availability provides real-time replication of data from a target server across to a second location. Using Double-Take, Frontier Continuity Service replicates data on Hampden Group's business critical servers in real-time over to a standby server in the Frontier Technology data center. In the event of any disaster affecting the primary server, the service can move users across to the secondary machine and service can be resumed.

This approach allows customers to enjoy the benefits of automated server failover and ensures uninterrupted access to data. With the Frontier service, no capital investment is needed as customers receive all the hardware, software and technical assistance they need to establish the service as part of a monthly subscription. This includes regular invocation testing, recovery procedures, remote monitoring and instant alerts.

Working with Frontier, Hampden Group installed Double-Take Availability on ten critical servers replicating data across to the Frontier Technology data center. As any data is changed on the production servers, it is automatically captured and the changes are sent across to the secondary server.

Double-Take Availability supports multiple physical and virtual server platforms, which stood Hampden Group in good stead as it moved some of its workloads over to virtual servers. Double-Take agents were simply installed within the new virtual machine images, and replication continued over to the Frontier data center.

Frontier Continuity Service has provided Hampden with an improved business continuity plan and a much reduced recovery time objective. "This project has seen us reduce our total recovery time from around two days to less than 30 minutes for our critical applications. In total, it has saved us time, effort and money. As part of our planning, we are now able to offer flexible working as part of this solution and have the reassurance of a 30-40 minute backup window which is very impressive," commented Hough. "This flexibility for users provides us with a significant benefit for our staff on top of the resilience and redundancy that we have as part of our business continuity planning."



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