"We were extremely impressed at how much the recovery time improved with the total solution from Dell, Vision Solutions and VMware. We literally went from a 24-48 hour recovery time with our tape-only approach to one and a half hours with the newly implemented DR plan. What's most impressive is that we recovered more information in a faster time with Double-Take Availability than was previously recovered from tape."

Mike Pelham, IT Manager, MWABank

Business Profile

Company Name:
MWABank

Headquarters:
Rock Island, Illinois

Industry:
Banking

Founded:
2003

Business Environment:
- Primarily a direct bank, one of approximately 50 direct banks in the US.
- Functions as an operating entity of Woodmen of America.
- Needs to maintain 24 hour a day access to it's banking systems.

Vision Solutions Product:
Double-Take® Availability

Critical issue

An outmoded disaster recovery solution forced technicians to rebuild their entire system from tapes. This process was time consuming and complex, taking at least 24 hours from beginning to end.

Results

- Performs server recoveries on-demand, to physically dissimilar or virtual systems.
- Manages backup and continuity operations for the entire enterprise from any web-connected device.
- Replicates production data to centralized backup servers in real time.
- Immediate failover capabilities meets and exceed their RTO and RPO benchmarks.

Technologies

- Double-Take Availability
- Microsoft Windows
- MS SQL Server
- Identify
- iMagic
- Novell GroupWise
- VMware

Business Challenge

MWABank is primarily a direct bank, one of only approximately 50 direct banks in the United States. Of the nearly 2500 life and property/casualty insurors in the United States, less than 40 have some type of banking charter. By direct bank, MWABank defines itself as principally conducting business via the Internet, mail, telephone and other electronic means. They have one traditional banking location situated in the Illinois Quad Cities.

MWABank is located in Rock Island, Illinois, the home of Modern Woodmen of America. They utilize the latest banking technology, which allows them to position itself as a great banking choice today and into the future. With such cutting edge technology, MWABank can meet its members'/customers' banking needs in many ways, above all, without geographic limitations. Without the overhead associated with operating multiple branch locations, MWABank can offer its customers outstanding products and services, which remains their ultimate goal.

MWABank had a cumbersome disaster recovery solution. At the time, the only thing to support recovery if an outage should occur was to rebuild from storage tapes stored at an off site location. If the server went down, the company had to rebuild the server from tape. The process was time consuming and complex, taking at least 24 hours from beginning to end.

Solution

IMWABank discussed DR possibilities with Dell, a Vision Solutions partner, who suggested the bank take a look at Double-Take Availability for real-time data protection and disaster recovery.

"MWABank realized the benefits of leveraging virtualization tools, but we also required real time data protection and high availability," said Mike Pelham, IT Manager, MWABank. "Therefore, we needed to deploy the "total package" in a cost-effective manner. After reviewing several products, we decided that the combination of Dell's hardware, VMware's virtual machines and Vision Solutions' Double-Take Availability replication technology was a no-brainer. "

MWABank loaded VMware onto a new Dell server and was able to replicate SQL server, Identify, iMagic, accounts payable, Novell GroupWise and user files to three virtual machines, using Double-Take Availability. They have since expanded to five virtual machines, all of which also use Double-Take Availability for continuous replication.

MWABank chose to use the combination of Double-Take Availability and VMware for disaster recovery due to Dell's recommendation, their ease of use and a great reputation. They realized that two companies with such a solid reputation would provide a solid solution, which was MWABank's ultimate goal. Since VMware offers the leading virtualization technologies, MWABank wanted to use their products as part of the total DR solution.

Additionally, because so many other big companies have relied on Double-Take Availability and VMware for years, it seemed like the most logical decision. MWABank realized that leveraging real-time replication and application availability in a virtual environment for DR was a cost-effective way to ensure that mission-critical applications and recovery point objective (RPO) and recovery time objective (RTO) goals were adequately met. The combined solutions provide a significantly better RTO and RPO than existing solutions such as tape backup.

With a stronger DR plan within the company's budget, the IT team at MWABank is now able to provide a reliable and quick recovery solution for the company. By combining real-time data protection with virtualization technologies, MWABank also achieved additional flexibility and cost efficiency without sacrificing capabilities.

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Another impressive factor for MWABank was the simple fact that this process could be accessed anywhere, at any time, as long as an internet connection is available. Those two factors, paired with the ability to house all virtual machines on one host made the implementation process seamless. Furthermore, due to the flexibility and stability of these technologies, MWABank will be able to further streamline its disaster recovery plan. As the company grows, the existing DR plan must also grow – accommodating additional virtual machines and servers that need to be protected.

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