Title Company Cuts Recovery Time for E-Mail and Remote Data by More Than 75 Percent

Overview

Country or Region: Canada
Industry: Insurance

Customer Profile

First Canadian Title is a leading provider of title insurance in Canada. Based in Oakville, Ontario, with regional offices across the country, First Canadian Title employs more than 900 people.

Business Situation

Over the last several years, e-mail and other data at First Canadian Title have been growing rapidly. The company was using VERITAS Backup Exec to manage its data, but backup and restoration could be time-consuming and unreliable.

Solution

First Canadian Title switched to the QiNetix suite of applications from CommVault Systems because it offered a unified solution for centralized management across the company.

Benefits

- Centralizes data management
- Cuts time to recover remote data by more than 75 percent
- Reduces time to restore archived e-mail by 80 percent
- Improves server performance
- Increases reliability of data backup

"We're striving to make sure that we have consistent services and standards across the company, and the ability to centrally manage the backup and restore service from one location has been a major benefit."

Dave Kereliuk, Senior Manager, Technical Services, First Canadian Title

First Canadian Title, which provides title insurance services to customers throughout Canada, was experiencing rapid growth of e-mail and other data on its Windows®-based network. The company used VERITAS Backup Exec to manage the data, but it was taking up to several hours for IT staff to restore data to end users, hindering worker productivity. Server performance suffered as the volume of data grew, and the IT staff had difficulty managing data at remote sites. To address these issues, First Canadian Title switched to the CommVault QiNetix software suite, including DataMigrator for e-mail archiving. Now the IT staff manages server data across the enterprise from a single console. Data is restored to remote sites 75 percent faster, and server performance has improved. In addition, end users easily recover archived e-mails themselves, reducing restoration time by 80 percent.

Situation

First Canadian Title offers products and services such as title insurance and mortgage programs to customers throughout Canada. In 2005 alone, working with 11,000 lawyers, notaries, and lenders, First Canadian Title provided more than 780,000 title insurance policies and associated services. Based in Oakville, Ontario, Canada, with regional offices across the country, First Canadian Title employs more than 900 people.

Growing at a rapid pace since the late 1990s, this industry-leading company has amassed a large repository of e-mail, database, and intranet site data. The volume of new e-mail alone was in the hundreds of megabytes a day. In the last several years, the company's server farm—hosting Microsoft® Exchange Server, SQL Server™, and Office SharePoint® Portal Server—has grown from 4 server computers to more than 250.

First Canadian Title used VERITAS Backup Exec to back up and restore data, but that solution was increasingly incompatible with the growing load of diverse data objects on the network. "We were adding more and more applications and servers to our environment, and the time required to do the backups was cutting into our production windows," says Dave Kereliuk, Senior Manager, Technical Services, First Canadian Title. "The solution we had in place just wasn't meeting our needs anymore."

Restoring data objects—including e-mail messages—to end users required intervention by IT personnel that took hours, sometimes days, and occasionally failed altogether. Exchange Server performance suffered as the volume of data on the servers grew, and users who stored e-mails in .pst files on their hard drives could not retrieve that data if the drives failed or they mistakenly deleted the files. In addition, it was difficult and time-consuming for IT staff to manage backup and recovery at remote locations.

As a result, end users could not efficiently retrieve information that was required to serve their customers, their business partners, and the representatives of government regulating agencies. Furthermore, the company faced increasingly expensive data storage costs.

First Canadian Title management concluded that the company needed a new solution that would improve backup and recovery performance and reliability as well as be able to archive a large percentage of its growing repositories of e-mail and other data.

Solution

First Canadian Title evaluated products from CommVault Systems, VERITAS, and CA. The company decided on CommVault QiNetix, a software suite based on the Windows® operating system. QiNetix applications include the Galaxy data backup and recovery solution along with snapshot management, remote replication, and data archiving. CommVault QiNetix products use the Common Technology Engine (CTE) architecture—a scalable framework optimized for data management. The CTE runs on Microsoft software, and together they help customers unify the management of complex computing environments.

First Canadian Title chose CommVault, a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, because it offered a unified solution for managing the data produced by current and future versions of the Microsoft software First Canadian Title was using, such as Exchange Server and SQL Server, as well as software that the company planned to deploy in the near future, such as SharePoint Portal Server. "We try to be in the forefront with Microsoft applications, so if Microsoft comes out with something new, as it did with SharePoint Portal Server, we need

a company like CommVault to keep up with the new products and new versions," says Kereliuk. "We could see that CommVault worked closely with Microsoft, focusing on the Microsoft space and delivering timely solutions."

First Canadian Title purchased a CommVault CommServe, part of the QiNetix suite, and it went live two months later, running on the Windows Server® 2003 operating system. The deployment went very smoothly, requiring only two days of formal IT training.

To address storage and performance issues related to Exchange Server, First Canadian Title purchased the CommVault DataMigrator add-on software and deployed it companywide. DataMigrator provided users with the ability to retrieve archived e-mails directly from the Microsoft Office Outlook® 2003 messaging and collaboration client. It took only about five minutes for each user to learn to retrieve archived e-mails. "From an end-user perspective, it's not complicated at all. It's very logical and very intuitive," says Kereliuk.

In addition, the Galaxy data backup and recovery solution provides single-instance storage of message- and mailbox-level backup data for public and private information stores. This speeds backup performance and minimizes storage requirements.

By basing the QiNetix suite on Windows, CommVault has been able to more easily keep its data management solution compatible with diverse platforms and new software versions, says Randy De Meno, Chief Evangelist–Windows Technologies and Microsoft Partnership at CommVault. "We built our suite out on top of Windows so we don't have some of the difficulties other vendors have to worry about. Windows is so pervasive that we can simply adhere to the

Windows standards and have just about every hardware platform covered." In addition, De Meno says, "We know what works on Windows 2000 Server is going to work on Windows Server 2003. Microsoft makes it fairly simple for us to have our solution evolve into the next platform that Microsoft supplies."

First Canadian Title now uses the Windows-centric CommVault solution to manage data for Windows Server 2003, Exchange Server 2003, and SharePoint Portal Server 2003.

The IT staff manages all the data—including data at remote locations—through a single console. With the CommVault solution, First Canadian Title can manage data on various levels: from servers and databases down to items such as e-mail messages, documents, contacts, and lists.

Benefits

By using CommVault QiNetix, First Canadian Title has gained a single solution for centrally managing Windows-based storage across its enterprise. The solution has improved backup and restoration efficiency, lowering the time required for data restores from remote sites by more than 75 percent and for e-mail recoveries by 80 percent. First Canadian Title has also improved server performance, backup reliability, and regulatory compliance.

Centralizes Data Management

With a single console, IT staff members at company headquarters can now back up and restore diverse Windows-based servers at all locations, including four remote data sites. Previously, the staff had to send IT personnel to a remote location or walk a non-IT user through the process. "We're striving to make sure that we have consistent services and standards across the company, and the ability to centrally manage the backup and restore service from one location has been a major benefit," says Kereliuk. "We no longer

have to wait on the non-IT people in other locations to assist the users out there. We can assist them here and provide them with a higher level of service overall."

Dramatically Reduces Time and Effort to Restore

The CommVault solution has saved time for both IT staff and end users. When using the former system to manage remote locations, it could take IT staff from a half day to a full day to recall backup tapes that weren't from the previous night's backup. "Now if a remote user calls and is missing a file, we can pull it off of our tapes here and restore it there within an hour," Kereliuk says. That is a reduction in recovery time of more than 75 percent.

Because e-mail data is backed up using QiNetix, end users can easily access archived e-mails with their Outlook client, even if the e-mails were first created from a version of Exchange Server no longer in use at First Canadian Title. Currently, users are reliably retrieving e-mails generated using Exchange Server 2003. This process is transparent to the person restoring the e-mails. Before First Canadian Title deployed DataMigrator, recovering archived e-mails took an IT intervention and an elapsed time per restore of about an hour, assuming the data could be found at all. Now the average restore is accomplished by the end user without intervention in about 10 minutes—eliminating IT effort for this task and reducing the restoration time by about 80 percent.

Improves Server Performance

By reducing the amount of data stored on the Windows-based servers and moving it to archives, CommVault QiNetix has improved server performance and slowed the growth of server-connected storage devices.

Advanced Outlook searches, which were previously hindered by the large information store in Exchange Server, now are much quicker. This is possible even though e-mail growth continues at a rapid pace. The rate of new e-mail data amounts to approximately 1 gigabyte a day—or a terabyte every three years. DataMigrator keeps up, moving that 1 gigabyte a day to the archives. "Because CommVault DataMigrator is archiving e-mail, our data growth is not creating a strain on the Exchange Server environment," says Kereliuk. "The CommVault solution helps keep the environment healthy."

Increases Reliability of Data Backup

With the former backup system, First Canadian Title could not reliably archive data because the system had not kept up with new products and add-ons that were producing data. In contrast, because CommVault and Microsoft work together on new developments at Microsoft, CommVault quickly delivers the needed upgrades to manage new and altered data types.

Improves Delivery of Compliance Information

In the regulation-intensive title insurance business, First Canadian Title gets many requests for compliance-related information from government regulators. The improvement in archiving reliability has meant that very few data objects get lost over time. When users try to retrieve old e-mails and other data using Outlook to search the archives, the items are there in readable form. First Canadian Title users are now able to retrieve information that might have been lost before the switch to QiNetix.

For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400. In Canada, call the Microsoft Canada Information Centre at (877) 568-2495. Customers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can reach Microsoft text telephone (TTY/TDD) services at (800) 892-5234 in the United States or (905) 568-9641 in Canada. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact your local Microsoft subsidiary. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to:
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For more information about CommVault Systems products and services, call (732) 870-4000 or visit the Web site at:
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For more information about First Canadian Title products and services, call (800) 307-0370 or visit the Web site at:
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Microsoft Server Product Portfolio

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