



Sporton International Microsoft DPM 2007 Case Study

Overview

Country/Region: Taiwan

Industry: High Tech

Customer Profile

Headquartered in Taipei, Taiwan, Sporton International Inc. (Sporton) is the largest electromagnetic compatibility (EMC) authentication, safety regulation detection, wireless network communication authentication, mobile phone authentication, and digital television authentication company in the market.

Business Situation

Sporton's existing process for backing up and restoring data had become inefficient and unreliable. The company needed an easy-to-use solution that would reduce the time, resources, and budget required to manage their backup and recovery processes across for their corporate headquarters and their remote offices in Taiwan, China, and Korea.

Solution

By deploying a solution based on Microsoft System Center Data Protection Manager 2007, Sporton was able to reduce their total IT backup and recovery overhead dramatically, with faster deployment, decreased time to back up and recover data, decreased staff overhead, and reduced need for support and maintenance.

Benefits

- 70% reduction in backup and recovery overhead
- 90% decrease in time to perform daily backups
- 70% reduction in time to troubleshoot back errors
- 90% decrease in file recovery time
- 70% savings in annual tape expenses
- 20% reduction in annual IT staff and maintenance

Testing and Certification Company Reduces IT Backup and Recovery Overhead by 70% with System Center Data Protection Manager 2007

Situation

Founded in 1986, Sporton International Incorporated is the *leading mobile communications certification company in Taiwan*. As the company grew and evolved over the years, it became increasingly difficult for their existing backup and recovery solution to meet data protection requirements. To address these issues, Sporton knew they needed to find an easy-to-use solution that would reduce the time, resources, and budget currently dedicated toward managing their backup and recovery processes.

Working with Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner SYSTEX, a leading provider of IT services across the Asia Pacific region, Sporton replaced their challenging, unreliable backup and recovery system with one based on Microsoft® System Center Data Protection Manager 2007.

In doing so, the company reduced its total IT backup and recovery overhead significantly over the previous solution. Offering a rapid deployment process and short learning curve for Sporton IT staff, Data Protection Manager 2007 quickly helped the company achieve a 70% decrease in the time required to back up and recover data, a lower staff overhead requirement, and a 20% reduction in their IT support and maintenance needs.

Located in the capital city of Taipei, Sporton International is Taiwan's largest provider of electromagnetic compatibility (EMC) authentication, safety regulation detection, wireless network communication authentication, mobile phone authentication, and digital television authentication services. Sporton's services are primarily used by mobile phone, IT product, and wireless product manufacturers, along with chipset designers.

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Kathy Lin, IT Manager, Sporton

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David Feng, Director of Technical Services, SYSTEX Corporation

The company employs 400 staff members across eastern Asia. Sporton offers detecting, testing, and report issuance of electromagnetic interference (EMI) and electromagnetic suspension (EMS); field testing of open sites and chambers; and debugging and modification of EMC; in addition to the testing of product safety. Sporton serves both domestic and overseas markets, including mainland China, Korea, Europe, and the Americas.

For some time, Sporton had been struggling with daily data backups using its existing software tool, a free utility they chose and implemented to provide better control over data management overhead. Over time, however, the company realized that there was a significant price to pay when using a free product.

As the company and its infrastructure grew and changed, its need for a more robust data management solution became more and more apparent. The free data backup tool that had served them for many years was becoming more and more overwhelmed by the new demands being placed upon it. When it came to reliability and capacity, the “free” solution had in fact become quite costly for the company.

The backup process across the company’s wide area network (WAN) had become noticeably slow and inefficient, often leaving a queue of up to 1 gigabyte (GB) of data waiting to be backed up at any given time. “Because our system was so sluggish, it was impossible for us to perform backups throughout the day,” says Kathy Lin, IT manager at Sporton. “Our only option was to perform one daily backup, which we ran overnight.”

One chronic issue was that the existing solution did not offer the functionality to back up data files while they were open and in use. Since the single daily automated backups took place at night, the solution skipped over

files that employees accessed and used outside of regular business hours during the backup process. This rendered daily backup status reports inaccurate, and required the company to hire a network administrator to dedicate a minimum of three full work days each week to identifying and correcting the growing number of errors.

Every morning, the network administrator had to manually review the backup log to determine which files had backed up successfully, and which had not. Files that were excluded from backup then had to be held for backup the following evening, creating an additional risk of losing critical business data during the interim hours.

Eventually, Sporton management realized that the company’s growth demanded that they take a much stronger approach to data backup and recovery. Management instructed the IT department to replace the nightly backup schedule with a more aggressive program of hourly data backup. Quickly concluding that the current solution simply could not support this type of initiative, the IT department began looking for alternatives.

They knew that traditional tape-based backup solutions were not the answer. Tape-based file recovery and data backup was too slow in comparison with newer disk-based solutions, and tape backup also required a significant investment in hardware, software, and ongoing maintenance. Additionally, tape backups can make scheduled downtime necessary, forcing a window of time when the systems being backed up could not be used.

Disk-to-disk-to-tape backup solutions offered a more robust alternative, where data is copied not to a backup tape, but instead to a share on a network server. The network share containing the backup is then backed up to tape. While this type of solution would have addressed many of Sporton’s needs, the company knew that its mid-sized

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infrastructure could not yet justify the high cost of a traditional, enterprise solution that offered disk-to-disk solution at a premium. Sporton needed a newer technology that afforded enterprise capabilities within a mainstream cost model.

In selecting a new data backup and recovery solution, Sporton had a number of specific requirements. At the highest level, the new system had to be easy to learn and use, so that the company could avoid extensive downtime while deploying the solution and training the IT staff.

Functionality played an important role in the decision as well. After struggling for far too long with a hit-and-miss backup and recovery process, Sporton was adamant about the feature set it needed. One issue involved the new management mandate of hourly backups. As Sporton was going to be backing up data continuously all day, it became even more critical for IT to have the ability to back up files while they were open and in use.

The company also needed an easy and centralized way to efficiently back up its servers running Microsoft® Exchange Server, Office SharePoint® Server, and SQL Server, along with its virtual servers. Using Windows Server® 2008 Hyper-V™ Sporton has 30 virtual servers running on five physical Windows Server® 2008 Enterprise-based servers, and they needed to provide continuous backup across all of them.

Backing up their remote office data was also a concern. Sporton’s eight remote offices are geographically dispersed across Taiwan, China, and Korea. With 10 file servers and four SQL Server-based servers housed in its satellite offices, the company needed to be able to easily back up at least 1.2 terabyte of remote data on a daily basis.

When it came to restoring data from backup, the company’s criteria were simple: the process needed to be significantly faster and

much more reliable. Sporton could no longer tolerate the multiple hours of productivity delays experienced by employees waiting for data restoration with its current system. Also, having automated and detailed reports on backup status would help the IT department identify potential issues so that they could quickly be addressed.

Sporton also needed to achieve a measurable reduction in the time required to manage both the backup solution and its processes. The company also hoped to limit the amount of staff resources necessary to maintain the new, aggressive backup and recovery strategy that it would soon be implementing.

Solution

To accomplish this, Sporton worked with SYSTEX to replace its existing data backup and recovery solution with System Center Data Protection Manager 2007. Data Protection Manager 2007, a member of the Microsoft® System Center family of products, provides tailored, application-aware protection for SQL Server, Exchange Server, and SharePoint Server through a powerful user interface, support for Windows PowerShell™, and a robust replication and checkpoint system. By combining continuous data protection (CDP) with traditional tape backup to protect business-critical data, Data Protection Manager 2007 makes fast, consistent backup and recovery possible.

SYSTEX encouraged Sporton to evaluate Data Protection Manager 2007 by joining the Data Protection Manager Technology Adoption Program (TAP). Sporton quickly found that Data Protection Manager 2007 not only addressed the shortcomings of their current backup and recovery solution, it also offered significant gains in cost savings and resource requirements.

Data Protection Manager 2007 can provide a superior level of protection and efficiency to

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the data backup process. Once the initial full backup has been run, Data Protection Manager 2007 can be configured to run hourly backups of any files that have been modified, copying only the data that has been changed since the previous backup. By backing up only the files that have been modified, Data Protection Manager 2007 saves both server space and network bandwidth. Using shadow copy functionality, which creates point-in-time copies of files as they are being modified, Data Protection Manager 2007 also makes it possible to back up data while it is being accessed by users.

When it becomes necessary to recover data files, Data Protection Manager 2007 provides a fast and easy path, with a user-friendly interface that enables both IT staff and users to quickly access and restore data without the inconvenience and downtime of having to load a tape.

Sporton deployed Data Protection Manager enterprise-wide while it was still in beta (version 2.0). The company was so impressed with its performance and functionality in backing up their terabyte files and hundreds of gigabytes of Exchange Server data, that they quickly selected Data Protection Manager to be their sole solution for backup and recovery.

David Feng, director of technical services at SYSTEX Corporation, says that ease of use, operational efficiencies, and cost savings were what ultimately led Sporton to choose the Microsoft® solution. “When Sporton discovered how completely Data Protection Manager met their criteria, and that it was significantly more cost-efficient than other products they had been evaluating, including offerings from CommVault and Veritas, they knew they had found the ideal solution.”

Time and Resource Gains

Using the Data Protection Manager wizards and workflows, Sporton was able to get its new system up and running in less than an

hour and streamline management. Because they no longer needed one dedicated backup administrator to handle the backup/restore job, they were able to reduce backup and recovery overhead by 70%.

While easily increasing the number of daily data backups more than 20-fold to meet Sporton’s new management directive, Data Protection Manager also empowered Sporton’s IT department to decrease the time required to perform those backups by 90% over their previous system. Backup errors at Sporton have diminished to the point where IT now spends 70% less time in recurrent analysis and troubleshooting activities. With its new Microsoft system in place, Sporton now has better access to and control over its data, and the day-to-day management of the backup and recovery processes has changed dramatically. “We have seen tremendous reductions in the time, resources, and the cost of managing our data backup and recovery process,” says Lin. “By being able to reduce our focus on that aspect of our responsibilities, we have been able to dedicate even more resources to other projects that support our organizational goals.”

Management and Maintenance Improvements

By continuously capturing data changes with application-aware block-level agents, Data Protection Manager is able to back up files even when they are being modified by the company’s staff, and it has supported IT in fulfilling the Sporton management directive for hourly data backups. Because DPM automatically provides the IT staff with reports on backup status, they can now quickly take steps to address issues as they arise, instead of waiting until the next morning to review backup logs. The enhanced reporting functionality in Data Protection Manager 2007 also empowers Sporton to better understand and forecast the trends of their data growth, and to more effectively plan for server capacity needs in the future.

For More Information

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For more information about Sporton International products and services, visit the Web site at: <http://www.sporton.com.tw/>

Because Data Protection Manager 2007 was designed to provide robust protection and reliable recovery for Windows Server®-based applications, Sporton is now able to recover data from their servers running Exchange Server, SharePoint Server, SQL Server, and virtual servers in minutes, decreasing the time required for IT to recover files for users by 90%. And many users can even recover files themselves, without having to wait for IT assistance.

Says Lin, "The reduction in employee downtime while waiting for data recovery has been significant. Users now can recover their own files easily by themselves in minutes, instead of waiting for hours for assistance from IT, and that makes a huge difference in everyone's productivity."

Remote Server Efficiencies

Sporton uses the Data Protection Manager 2007 disaster recovery feature to centrally back up the data on each of their remote servers and to provide failover recovery to the central Data Protection Manager server should a remote server crash. By using their local Data Protection Manager-based servers to back up local data, the company saves the bandwidth consumed by backup between branch offices and then uses the central Data Protection Manager more efficiently during off-hours to back up the remote data.

True Savings Across the Bottom Line

By reducing the company's need for tape-based backup, the Data Protection Manager solution has saved Sporton 70% over their previous annual tape expenses. And by diminishing the need for extensive support of the backup and recovery system, the company has been able to reduce its IT budget for staff and maintenance costs by 20% each year.

According to Lin, the choice to go with Data Protection Manager has been a win-win situation company-wide for Sporton. "We went from struggling with a system that was monopolizing our IT resources on a daily basis, to one that has helped us overcome those obstacles and has also enabled important gains in productivity across the company. Today we are able to use our resources much, much better, and for that we credit Microsoft."

Microsoft System Center

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