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> **Michael Grillo**
> Principal IT Engineer
> Foxwoods

World's Largest Casino Bets on SEPATON for Data Protection

The largest resort casino complex in the world comprises six distinctive casinos, three hotels offering more than 1,400 rooms, more than 50 restaurants and retail outlets, nightclubs and a 1,400-seat theater. Casino staff use a wide range of advanced computer systems, including slot machine monitoring, state-of-the-art financial management, reservations systems, and many more to keep this complex operating smoothly. When the casino's tape-based data protection systems could no longer handle the volume of data being generated by these systems, their principal IT engineer turned to SEPATON® for a simple, effective way to store, protect and manage their data.

Foxwoods Overview

Industry: hospitality, gaming
1,400 rooms
25 restaurants
4,000-seat arena

Backup Application

IBM Tivoli Storage Manager

Key Benefits

Cut backup times by one third
Cut restore time in half
Nearly eliminated manual tape
 media management

The Environment

Before choosing SEPATON, the casino IT staff had been using an IBM® TotalStorage® 3494 tape library with ten IBM TotalStorage Enterprise Tape System 3590 tape drives and IBM Tivoli® Storage Manager (ITSM) software for their data backup/restore functions. They created two sets of tapes for all data–an on-site set for rapid access and a backup set that was stored off-site for disaster protection.

"The volume of our data and the complexity of our infrastructure had grown to a point where tape backup was no longer an option for us," said Michael Grillo, principal IT engineer, Foxwoods. Managing tape media was also an inefficient use of their limited IT resources. "With just four people to handle all of our server administration as well as our data management, we couldn't afford to waste our time on handling tapes, dealing with backup failures and managing our space allocation. We knew we needed to move to a virtual tape library solution," he added.

The Challenge

The casino needed a system that would cut backup and restore times, reduce the need for manual intervention and minimize downtime. They also wanted a more efficient way of providing off-site disaster protection.

The Evaluation

Foxwoods IT staff evaluated a SEPATON S2100®-ES2 virtual tape library and several other disk-based solutions. "Our need for high performance quickly narrowed the field," said Grillo. "SEPATON was much faster for both backup and restore than any of the other solutions that we looked at."

The casino's on-site testing revealed that the SEPATON S2100 was a more comprehensive solution than other technologies. The SEPATON S2100-ES2 includes both the hardware and VTL software in an easy-to-implement appliance. "If we had a question, we wanted to be able to get the answer with one call," said Grillo. "Other solutions were not nearly as integrated and their support staff were not as knowledgeable in backup software as SEPATON."

The casino staff also wanted a solution that would help them leverage their investment in tape technology. "We considered a solution that worked only with FalconStor® software," said Grillo. "But, because we came from an ITSM environment, we would have had to learn a whole new application if we went with any other solution." By choosing SEPATON, the casino staff could continue to work in a familiar environment. "The SEPATON system was the only VTL certified for use with ITSM and SEPATON support is our single source for all of our backup/restore questions."

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The Solution

The casino staff installed a SEPATON S2100-ES2 virtual tape library with 60 TB capacity and two SEPATON scalable replication engine (SRE®) processing nodes.

Installing and implementing the SEPATON S2100-ES2 was simple. "The SEPATON system was up and running in a few hours," said Grillo. The casino IT staff configured the VTL in ITSM in the same way they set up their physical tape library. They did not need to change policies, procedures or their backup target.

Dramatic Results

The system exceeded their expectations for performance. "The SEPATON system cut our backup time by one third and cut our restore time in half," said Grillo. The casino has also seen marked improvement in their tape reclamation and migration activities. The casino reduced the number of physical tapes they were managing from 1,500 to only a few hundred used for off-site data vaulting.

For this casino the biggest advantage of the SEPATON system was the elimination of time-consuming media management tasks. The casino staff are also pleased with the added reliability provided by the system. It has run continuously since it was implemented. "We no longer waste time loading and unloading physical tapes and troubleshooting backup and tape drive failures," said Grillo. "That makes everyone's life easier and more productive."

Looking forward, the casino is converting their tape library to virtual tapes and plans to add another SEPATON system in a remote location for disaster recovery protection.