

Customer Case Study

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Manager, System Software Support
Leading Insurance Company

Leading Insurance Company Protects Data with SEPATON

A leading insurance company, based in Bethesda, MD, provides auto insurance coverage for more than 6 million policyholders and insures more than 10 million vehicles. Effective data management is central to this company's ability to deliver excellent customer service. The company uses a variety of sophisticated IT systems and databases to provide its customers and its customer service staff with 24-hour access to comprehensive sales, service, and claims information. When the insurance company's tape backup system could no longer provide the level of data protection it needed, its IT staff turned to SEPATON® for a best-in-class virtual tape library solution.

Company Overview

Auto insurance company with 6 million policyholders.

Backup Application

Veritas® NetBackup® by Symantec®

Key Benefits

- Cut backup windows in half
- Eliminated time-consuming tape drive failures
- Streamlined remote-site backup processes

The Environment

“We knew we needed a virtual tape library backup/recovery solution for both our data center in Fredericksburg and for our headquarters in Bethesda,” said the insurance company's manager of system software support. “Physical tape just can't deliver the performance or flexibility we need.”

The insurance company's data center is equipped with several complex database systems that store, manage, and access large volumes of data on customer profiles, claims, and policies. In addition, IT staff implemented an award-winning website to give customers direct, immediate access to this information. Employees in the company's headquarters use these financial and business management systems to keep their nationwide organization running smoothly.

The Challenge

The insurance company was using a Qualstar® tape library with LTO1 tape drives to back up more than 30 TB of data nightly. Data management staff also created a second set of tapes for off-site data vaulting. “We have a 38-hour backup

window to work within,” said the manager. “Between the slow performance and regular failures of our tape drives, our backups were exceeding that window far too often.” The company's customer website, which promises 24/7 access to data, put further pressure on the IT staff to shorten backup times.

In addition to high performance and reliability, the insurance company's IT staff also wanted a system that could scale to meet their rapidly growing data volumes. Since they would continue to use physical tape for off-site disaster protection, they needed a system that would work seamlessly in a heterogeneous environment.

The Solution

The insurance company implemented two SEPATON 2100®-ES2 VTLs with NetBackup software application. The appliances were delivered fully configured to meet the insurance company's specifications.

A 120 TB SEPATON VTL protects their data center while a 21 TB system protects their headquarters. The IT staff performs backups to both the SEPATON VTL and to a tape system for off-site vaulting using the NetBackup in-line copy function.

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SEPATON's advanced emulation capabilities make the S2100-ES2 appear to the backup software as their existing physical tape system. As a result, the insurance company did not have to change its backup/restore policies or reconfigure its systems in any way.

The Results

"The SEPATON system solved several problems for us," said the manager. "First, it cut our backup windows in our data center in half; second, it eliminated time-consuming tape drive failures; and third, it streamlined our remote-site backup processes." The ES2's increased reliability also eliminated cumbersome media management tasks and freed valuable IT staff time. "We now have time to work on more IT projects," said the manager.

The ES2's modular scalability also provides the insurance company IT staff with peace of mind. "We didn't have to tie up capital by buying huge systems and hoping we would grow into them," said the manager. "We don't have to worry about outgrowing our SEPATON systems either."

The SEPATON technology proved particularly valuable when the company had a crisis that necessitated restoring a business-critical 3 TB DB2 database. "The SEPATON unit handled this restore with ease, pumping data to the DB2 at rates approaching wire-speed, all the while running the regular backup schedule," said the manager.

The insurance company was impressed with the level of customer service provided by SEPATON. "SEPATON's support and technical staff were committed to making our experience with their product as positive as possible," said the manager. "When we have a question or an issue, they are there for us."

In addition to the immediate benefits, the insurance company sees the long-term value of choosing SEPATON for its backup/recovery solution. "We didn't want to get locked into a trendy technology that would only suit us for a year or two," said the manager. "SEPATON designed a product that will be a valuable asset both now and well into the future."

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