

CherryRoad Technologies Explores Galaxy, Discovers Better Backups

QUICK FACTS

Industry/Solution:

- High Technology

Platform/File System:

- Windows 2000 and 2003

Applications:

- Microsoft Exchange, SQL Server 2000, PeopleSoft ERP

Partner Hardware:

- Dell PowerEdge servers
- EMC Clariion storage area network
- ADIC Scalar 100 tape library

Challenge:

- Backup and restore critical Microsoft Exchange and PeopleSoft applications
- Reliable backups of storage area network
- Backup over the network of remote offices

Competitive Challengers:

- Veritas NetBackup

Solution:

- CommVault Galaxy Backup & Recovery
- AUX Copy
- Synthetic Full Backup
- CommVault Data Archiver

Benefits:

- Faster more reliable backups
- Synthetic Full Backups allows backup of remote sites with reduced network load
- Simplified backup management with CommCell
- Tracking of backup tapes offline

Customer Profile

CherryRoad Technologies, Inc. is a full service systems integrator serving more than 400 customers, including Fortune 1000 companies, institutions of higher learning, and the public sector. Headquartered in Parsippany NJ, CherryRoad Technologies has 400 employees and offices in locations throughout the United States, including Chicago IL, Irvine CA, and Vienna VA. Among the company's primary areas of expertise is the implementation of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems.

Data Management Environment

CherryRoad Technologies' centralized IT department is located at the company's headquarters in Parsippany NJ. The computing infrastructure there includes approximately thirty Dell PowerEdge servers running under the Windows 2000 and Windows 2003 operating systems. Primary data storage is provided by an EMC Clariion storage area network (SAN) with a capacity of 1.5 terabytes. Attached to the SAN is an ADIC Scalar 100 tape library with four LTO drives and 60 available media slots. Says Anthony Paulina, Network Systems Architect, "The mission of the IT is to make sure all the systems are backed up, to protect the integrity of the data, and to keep operations running smoothly — all without anybody noticing." To protect their critical applications, CherryRoad depends on CommVault Galaxy backup and recovery software, part of CommVault's unified data management suite.

Problems with SAN Backup

When CherryRoad first installed their SAN in 2002, their backup software was Veritas NetBackup. Over several months, they began to experience problems. Backups were not running all the time. They also discovered that if they wanted to track the location of tapes that had been sent off-site, they would be required to purchase an additional software package. "Veritas' response to our backup

problems was to tell us to remove and re-install the software," says Paulina. "We got sick of doing that." As a result, they decided not to buy the additional package, and instead went looking for a new backup solution.

After seeing a demonstration of the Galaxy software and talking to a number of CommVault customers, the IT team decided that Galaxy was the right solution, and they installed Galaxy in April 2003. Says Paulina, "We have been amazed at how much better backups have been operating, with exactly the same equipment. NetBackup kept failing. In contrast, we've been extremely happy with Galaxy's performance. We're happy with everything about it." They were especially pleased with the fact that Galaxy tracks the location of tapes that have been sent off-site and when they are the past their retention dates and can be re-used. "This is part of the basic Galaxy product," notes Paulina, "versus NetBackup, where we had to buy another package to do that."

Protecting Critical Applications

Two critical applications at CherryRoad are PeopleSoft business applications and Microsoft Exchange email. "Those are primary," says Paulina. "If we have downtime on those applications, we have problems. We do implementation of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems. In the course of our business, there is a lot of email back and forth between us and our customers, and between our consultants working on projects. We must protect that email." The PeopleSoft internal environment supports all of the company's human resources and financial information. They also maintain a PeopleSoft environment for field consultants, so they have an environment in which consultants can develop and test solutions without tying up customer production systems.

Galaxy Doesn't Give Up

One of the strengths of Galaxy is its flexibility, says Paulina. He explains, "With every other backup software I've worked with, if you have a problem with the backup, the software just fails the backup, and you just have to start all over again, or wait for the next backup to catch up, potentially leaving you with a hole in your backup. If Galaxy sees a problem — for example, a dirty tape or a tape drive fails — Galaxy goes back to the last chunk of the backup that was completed, and puts the job on hold until it gets resolved. It does not just fail the job. So if you are able to resolve the problem, the backup resumes, and you haven't lost a lot of time and you don't have a hole in your backup."

Galaxy Backs Up Everything

CherryRoad runs weekly full backups and daily incremental backups of the SAN. A total of six servers are attached to the SAN, including two clusters with two servers each, and two stand-alone servers. These servers, which are running the critical MS Exchange and PeopleSoft applications, back up directly to the library. The SAN has 1.5 TB disk capacity, and daily incremental backups average 230 to 300 GB, while full backups on the weekend are about one terabyte.

In addition, CherryRoad has another twenty servers that are not connected to the SAN. These servers are backed up disk-to-disk using Galaxy. Once a week the AUX Copy capability of Galaxy is used to make a copy to tape for archiving. Most of these servers get weekly full and daily incremental backups. However, some of them, including the SQL servers, get daily full backups.

The whole backup process is made easy to manage by CommVault's CommCell management system. Says Paulina, "CommCell is very straightforward, and it's Web-based, so I can get to it from anywhere on the system. It just works!"

Synthetic Full Backups for Remote Offices

CherryRoad also backs up its field offices using Galaxy. Each of the company's remote offices has its own file server. The field office file servers are backed up remotely, over the network, with daily incrementals and weekly Synthetic Full backups. The use of the Synthetic Full backup capability of Galaxy minimizes the amount of time the network is tied up with backups.

Data Archiver Shrinks Mailboxes

CherryRoad is upgrading their email to Microsoft Exchange 2003 and at the same time installing CommVault Data Archiver to manage the migration of email data out of local mailboxes to less costly secondary storage. Migration is based on user-defined criteria; at CherryRoad, Data Archiver removes any email that has not been accessed in a year. "We are quite impressed with Data Archiver's ability to shrink size of mailboxes," says Paulina. "For example, my mailbox shrank by 40%, and I am one of the more diligent email users at taking old emails off my mailbox." In the first tests of Data Archiver, IT identified two mailboxes, each with about a gigabyte of data. Data Archiver shrank those two mailboxes to a combined total of 150 megabytes. When it is fully deployed, Paulina expects that Data Archiver will reduce the size of the Microsoft Exchange database server, reduce the chances of corruption, cut backup tape consumption by 25%, and cut backup time for the Exchange server by about 33%—all resulting in lower costs.

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