

# RICHARDSON

## Richardson International Cultivates Modern Data Management & Virtual Server Protection With Commvault Simpana Software

### QUICK FACTS

#### Industry/Solution:

- Agriculture

#### Platform/File System:

- Novell OES/eDir
- SUSE Linux Enterprise 10 and 11
- Microsoft Windows
- IBM AIX

#### Applications:

- Custom agribusiness applications
- ERP and Oracle databases
- Novell GroupWise
- VMware vSphere 4.1

#### Partner Hardware:

- Dell Compellent SAN

#### Challenges:

- Unreliable backup and recovery of completely virtualized environment created operational inefficiencies
- Separate point products for virtual server protection, remote tape backups, desktop/laptop protection and DR exacerbated administrative strain
- Unreliable deduplication caused additional performance problems
- One full-time staffer was required to baby-sit the faulty process

#### Customer Profile

Richardson International is Canada's largest, privately owned agribusiness, serving the Canadian and international agriculture and food sectors for more than 150 years. Based in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, the highly progressive company was built on a foundation of quality and integrity, which is reinforced in how Richardson handles and merchandizes all major Canadian-grown grains and oilseeds.

As a global leader in agriculture and food processing, Richardson has a long list of accomplishments, such as being the first company to handle western-grown grain, build grain elevators in Canada's prairie communities and market canola oil worldwide. Richardson International also has the distinction of being named one of Canada's 50 Best Managed Companies, which is underscored by a corporate-wide commitment to cultivating innovative products, markets and solutions to help satisfy the needs of a growing world.

According Paul Beaudry, Assistant Vice President of Technical Services, Management Information Services for Richardson International, and the company is pragmatic and value focused when it comes to IT. "In making technology decisions, we're always looking for ways to lower costs, reduce administration and increase efficiencies so we

can achieve the greatest return on investments," he explains. "CommVault Simpana software plays an important role in that area by enabling us to lower TCO while maximizing staff resources."

#### Data Management Environment

A 52-person IT department, including 30 software developers, oversees a completely virtualized environment that supports 1,750 employees across Canada and consists of two data centers, custom agribusiness applications and approximately seven terabytes of vital corporate data. "Our environment is 100 percent virtualized, which extends across eight multi-server remote sites and 100 single-server remote sites," says Beaudry. "We were early adopters of virtualization to support our developers and infrastructure specialists, who are huge proponents of open source and Linux. They didn't want two PCs on their desktops for Windows and Linux, so it made sense to move to virtualization. As a result, we've reduced our capital expenditures, maintenance costs and carbon footprint."

Six years ago, Richardson International standardized on VMware and today uses VMware vSphere 4.1 to support virtual servers and guests running OES and SUSE Linux Enterprise 10 and 11. In addition, the company has a small population of Windows

## QUICK FACTS (continued)

### Solution:

- CommVault Simpana software Backup & Recovery, Deduplication and Virtual Server Agents

### Benefits:

- Greatly improved support for virtualized environment due to tight integration with VMware and ability to leverage vStorage API for data protection.
- Additional ability to perform local and centralized backups/restores enabled elimination of two point products in favor of Simpana software; considering the elimination of a third product with the addition of desktop laptop support
- Capacity licensing model enables team to focus on solutions rather than get caught up in costing models
- Streamlined administration has freed approximately one full-time staffer for lowered costs and increased efficiencies
- Nine-month ROI projected, especially as the company seeks ways to leverage other capabilities provided by CommVault's unified approach to data protection.

servers as well as IBM AIX systems to support ERP and Oracle databases. The vast majority of Richardson's custom software has been written in Java or other open-source technologies hosted on Apache Tomcat servers.

The company's current desktop environment is XP with a migration to Windows 7 about 50 percent complete with Microsoft Office and a growing population of Novell LibreOffice users. On the storage side, Richardson International relies on Dell Compellent SANs to provide scalable, flexible storage for its ever-evolving virtualized environment.

"With CommVault Simpana software, we've been able to migrate off three disparate point products and consolidate all our data protection requirements on a singular platform that delivers end-to-end protection of our entire environment," says Beaudry. "The result is a more efficient, interoperable and easier method for managing and protecting vital data."

### Weeding out Legacy Data Protection Problems

Before deploying CommVault® Simpana® software, Richardson International struggled to maintain its legacy IBM Tivoli Storage Manager implementation, which had been in place since 2002 to consolidate tape backups for approximately 50 file servers and 100 remote sites. Over time, this approach became cumbersome and tedious, especially as the company migrated more toward virtualization.

According to Richardson International, TSM was behind the rest of the industry in terms of supporting VMware integration, disk-based backups and deduplication. Upgrading to the latest TSM version only compounded the problems the company experienced,

extending the backup window and continued to require constant monitoring. "Most days, two employees spent 50 percent of their time managing backups and staying on top of TSM," adds Beaudry. "This was an inefficient and costly use of resources."

"TSM was lacking when it came to their virtualization roadmap, which was a major issue for us," recalls Scott Watson, Senior Technical Analyst for Richardson International. "Upgrading to version 6 only made matters worse as we dealt with 10-hour backup windows and persistent support challenges." The team also experienced a lot of issues while testing IBM's deduplication capabilities. "We had a horrible experience testing IBM's dedupe for a month and gave up, even though we felt that reducing redundant data should work well with virtualized machines," Watson adds.

After months of trying to rectify ongoing challenges with TSM version 6, Richardson International decided to look at other options for safeguarding virtualized corporate information. Guided by insight on major industry players as identified in well-respected research from Gartner and Forrester, the team decided to evaluate CommVault Simpana software, Symantec NetBackup, HP Data Protector as well as SyncSort, which the team was using to handle remote tape backups at its eight multi-server remote sites.

### Sowing Seeds of Integrated Virtual Server Protection

In reviewing the virtual server protection landscape, Richardson International sought a new platform to fit its virtualized environment. "It was clear we could take advantage of the new SAN and advanced data protection to support our environment faster, easier and much more efficiently than before," says Watson.

The Richardson team conducted peer research and solicited input from a CIO group in Manitoba as well as various LinkedIn forums. In particular, they were impressed by the overwhelmingly positive feedback on CommVault Simpana software, which users reported could be easily deployed and effortlessly managed for worry-free data protection. CommVault's modern approach to data protection featured a singular platform, which contrasted with the disparate product approach taken by other contenders. CommVault users applauded Simpana software's value-add as the process of adding more functionality over time was straightforward and tight integration with VMware ensured seamless virtual server protection.

"We spoke to two camps of CommVault customers: those who had used Simpana software for years and took its reliable performance for granted because it basically ran unaided," Watson adds. "In the other camp were users who had ripped out legacy solutions in favor of Simpana and could speak to how it alleviated their pain and provided lots of extra value after it was deployed."

In contrast, Symantec users weren't nearly as bullish, which confirmed the team's nagging concerns about previous challenges and spotty support they'd encountered with other Symantec products. Neither SyncSort nor HP Data Protector measured up to Simpana software in terms of enterprise capabilities, so the team moved forward with a deep-dive review of CommVault. Following a technical overview of Simpana software's features and functionality, Richardson International decided to replace both IBM TSM and SyncSort with Simpana software.

### **Harvesting a Bumper Crop of Simpana Software Benefits**

During a one-week engagement with CommVault's technical services team, Richardson International completed a trouble-free Simpana software implementation. CommVault stepped the team through installation and configuration after quickly getting up-to-speed on Richardson's virtualized environment.

After a straightforward and smooth deployment of Simpana software's Virtual Server Agent (VSA), Richardson International was ready to safeguard hundreds of virtualized machines. Moreover, the ability to create secondary copies on tiered disk or tape for disaster recovery was very appealing as Simpana software took advantage of VMware's vStorage API for data protection (VADP). "Seamless integration with VMware's vStorage API enables us to easily trigger snapshots of virtual machines on our storage array," explains Mauricio Novoa, Senior Technical Analyst for Richardson International. "Simpana software connects directly to our Dell Compellent SAN for transparent backups."

The team also likes the ability to perform local backups and then bring the data back to the data center for longer-term retention and disaster recovery, which enabled Richardson International to eliminate its SyncSort remote tape backups. Now the company takes advantage of CommVault's source-side deduplication to reduce redundant data before sending it over the corporate network. With Simpana software's embedded deduplication, organizations can reduce network traffic by up to 90 percent. "Simpana software removes the need for any bandwidth throttling to alleviate traffic bottlenecks, even over slow

links," adds Novoa. Having backup data in the company's master repository also elevates Richardson's DR strategy while enabling the IT team to expedite problem resolution and minimize downtime.

With Simpana software in place, Richardson International has dramatically lowered its administrative overhead as there is no longer a need to babysit the process. "We have probably freed the equivalent of a full-time staffer as Simpana software's single pane of glass management makes it easy to perform both backups and recoveries of our entire environment," says Beaudry. "We appreciate having the flexibility to conduct LAN-free backups along with full VM image or granular file recoveries, which ensures the highest levels of virtual server protection."

Downloading Simpana service pack upgrades is an equally painless process. "Everything works fine, just as we would expect it to," adds Watson. "Recently, we placed our first-ever support call and we got a fast response and resolution."

Another major benefit in moving to Simpana software is CommVault's capacity licensing model, which takes the load off the technical team when it comes to assessing what's needed to fully safeguard Richardson's vast environment. "With hundreds of potential backup sources, CommVault's capacity licensing model works great for us," Beaudry adds. "Now the team can focus on what needs protection without worrying about the economics. This approach helps us make better decisions without worrying about performing individual cost analyses every time we want to expand our capabilities."

To that end, Richardson International is considering other ways to leverage Simpana software's full scope of capabilities, including data protection for the company's desktops and laptops as well as file archiving to better balance long-term retention needs with lowering costs to manage primary data. "We're currently using CrashPlan to protect 300 laptops but clearly see an opportunity to review and possibly retire this solution in favor of CommVault's Simpana software edge data protection solution," adds Beaudry. "We would replace three disparate products with CommVault's unified platform for additional savings in cost and administration."

In adding up all the extended features and capabilities delivered by CommVault, Richardson International projects rapid ROI. "We expect to achieve a return on our Simpana software investment in approximately nine months, especially with so many additional features that we can continue to benefit from," concludes Beaudry.

**Safe Harbor Statement:**

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