



Voice of the Customer Report

Customer
McHenry Savings Bank
Your Bank... Your kind of People!

Vendor
EMC² | data domain

Data Domain Deduplication Storage

October 2009



The INI Group Voice of the Customer Reports

IT professionals find real value in the experiences of other customers in order to help inform their buying decisions. The Voice of the Customer (VoC) program is designed to provide insightful information for IT professionals to understand different products and services. The INI Group is a consulting firm with expertise in data storage, disaster recovery, data management, security and virtualization and we work closely with our customers to provide the VoC service.

Background

The INI Group interviewed Derek Niedermayer, network support supervisor. This is how Derek describes his role:

“I’m the networks support supervisor. All my responsibility is pretty much anything that deals with the network. I really don’t have any staff. I’ve been with the company for six years.”

The following is an overview of McHenry Savings Bank’s IT environment:

- Five branches
- Eleven virtual hosts
- Twenty physical servers in the data center
- Full twenty-four uptime window
- VMware ESX
- Hub and spoke topology
- Three terabytes of online storage
- Two terabytes of local disk storage

INI Group: Why did you decide to implement a disk-to-disk backup solution that supports data deduplication?

Derek Niedermayer: When we chose to go to disk-to-disk backup - our major persuasion to go to this route was the issues with tape. We have large courier fees being very far north so we were paying a lot to have tapes removed off-site. And of course just the amount of time supporting a tape infrastructure again with just two people, it took up a lot of our time. We do full backups of all our data daily - so we were rotating out a lot of tapes every day and where our resources could be used in some other form or fashion more efficiently than supporting tape so that was one of our major concerns.

In 2007 we switched everything to data imaging so we don't really have couriers that were driving from branches-to-branches anymore so that kind of helped force us to looking into disk-to-disk back up. We didn't have any physical logistics of getting tape from branches back to our main site. That was one of our largest concerns and reducing those fees because we didn't want to expend more fees just for moving tapes.

After converting everything to virtualize, we got everything in our SAN environment and realized well, now we have everything here centralized and it's all data. Now we've got to get it off site so technologies like Data Domain offer the ability to de-duplicate that data off-site in a smaller bandwidth constraint. We do have T1 connections between our branches and we do data replicate to our branch with a Data Domain device across a T1 line and we didn't want to increase bandwidth for backing up.

INI Group: What was the process you used to make a final decision to go with Data Domain?

Derek Niedermayer: We were just basically looking for a device that would just get our data off-site. We kind of looked at it reinventing the backup infrastructure. We looked at some other CDP appliances. This is where we found Data Domain - where we didn't have to reinvent how we were backing up our data. To us it's just a CIFS share that sits off our proxy server or our backup server. It's just presented as local storage. We back up to Data Domain, they use their algorithm to compress and compact that data and then of course they have their own replication techniques to replicate to another Data Domain device.

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INI Group: Can you give us examples of how Data Domain provided real value to your company?

Derek Niedermayer: Our ultimate goal for the first time was - we were looking for least fourteen days of quick replication. We're doing archive processes to tape at before going to disk-to-disk solution. When we first implemented the device, and after having it run for approximately two weeks, we noticed the compression was so extreme. Not only did our restore retention period go beyond our fourteen days and currently we're sitting at forty-two days as of yesterday when I looked so we were able to keep a lot quicker local storage to restore from. The amount of time to restore to that device, because now that we're all virtualized, it's just a matter of restoring the VMDK file and re-presenting it to virtual center and bringing up the device. So that was another extreme real value for us because for disaster recovery and retention times, again with a small staff, we were looking at just the real value of being able to restore quickly and not waste our time and in the case of a disaster and getting that data quickly.

INI Group: Can you tell us how Data Domain has improved the overall economic effectiveness within your IT operations?

Derek Niedermayer: Not only do we do full backups, we've increased our window size in comparable to tape. We've taken essentially a couple servers that are five hundred gig in size, which in a traditional tape environment, we couldn't do that daily. Now we have the ability to do that that daily. The jobs fire off at ten o'clock and they're done at seven in the morning. We're able to meet that requirement for our own internal policies. We've decreased the human error not only with rotating tapes, with documenting those tapes and then of course the security concerns of a lost tape or a tape that's destroyed or gone bad. You know, when you desperately need that data that needs to be recovered. And of course again with our disaster recovery now we have the ability to recover data quickly and we can prove that we do full disaster test once a year and are able to bring our full production server up in less than four hours and we've been able to prove that and it's increased our success rate when comes to DR testing.

INI Group: Did you look at any other disk-based backup or VTL solutions?

Derek Niedermayer: We only strictly look at disk-based backup solutions. We didn't look at any virtual tape library solutions. And this was just purely unique to our scenario and the fact that we already kind of pretty much had a backup software in place. We didn't necessarily - weren't looking to reengineer the process or increase backup footprint or if you will, on each server with agents and what not.

INI Group: Did you look at any software-based solutions provided by the back of vendors?

Derek Niedermayer: Yes. We did look at Avamar, which has a great compression algorithm. We were very impressed by it. Unfortunately for budgetary constraints and then of course again reengineering our process of backing up, that solution didn't completely fit our needs.

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INI Group: How has implementing Data Domain changed your usage of tape now and in the future?

Derek Niedermayer: We've kind of phased out tape. We do not really even use tape at all. I don't think we really even planned to use tape because now we have the ability to replicate off site and we can also do retention off-site. It's just basically data now and we've been able to increase our retention period longer, I mean of course tapes are "archivable", but now we can archive the same way we did but to other physical devices. It's just a matter now just moving data.

INI Group: Can you give us any insights on Data Domain that would be useful for other IT professionals considering the solution?

Derek Niedermayer: We definitely needed to make some adjustments, in regards to the replication process. We didn't really run into any pitfalls or anything when it came to backing up to our primary Data Domain device at our local network. But when it came to replicating, we did have to do some reengineering. It's just a matter of there might be some adjustments that you might have to make for this product.

INI Group: What are the next steps using your Data Domain solution?

Derek Niedermayer: I think really our next step is possibly increasing some size on how much data or increasing our retention window. We are really pretty much happy with the device. I don't think there's really too much that we're looking to change. We're looking definitely at some more archival processes, but again with Data Domain, you just present it to a proxy as a CIFS share. And she's moving data.

INI Group: Would you recommend using Data Domain to other IT professionals? And tell us why.

Derek Niedermayer: I would definitely recommend Data Domain. One, their compression algorithm is amazing. We've been able to basically send twenty terabytes of data to the device and after compression it's given ninety-six percent compression - which was about nine hundred ninety-three gigabytes of data. The compression algorithm that they use and what they use is amazing. I definitely would recommend this device. I think it's one of those devices you can just place in your network. There's not a lot of reengineering, not a lot re-education.

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