

INNOVATIVE DATA PROTECTION TECHNOLOGIES

THE NEED TO PROTECT AND BACK UP DATA IS GROWING EXPONENTIALLY. SHODEN DATA SYSTEMS HAS LEADING-EDGE TECHNOLOGIES TO OVERCOME THE CHALLENGES THIS CREATES.

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Data is the lifeblood of any organisation, so protecting it and ensuring it is available in a time of disaster is vital. However, the data protection environment comes with its own challenges, not the least of which is the sheer volume of data that needs to be backed up. While tape has been the traditional method of backing up data, the rapid rate at which data is growing has made this technology all but obsolete.

According to Adrian Wood, business development manager at Shoden Data Systems, a new technology was required to fundamentally change the way organisations manage their data storage and recovery requirements.

“For many of our customers, tape is the final un-automated task in the data centre. It is a mechanical process and effectively only provides a single copy. Tape gets stretched, prodded and pulled, and the more it is reused, the more likely it is that it will have problems,” says Wood.

“The real issue is that you only go to the tape when there has been a disaster, and that is not a good time to discover that the tape itself has a problem. This method means you are effectively doing nothing more than hoping the tape will work, and hope is definitely not a good data centre strategy.”

CAPACITY-OPTIMISED STORAGE

Wood points out that many of Shoden’s customers had begun implementing disk-based solutions instead, but even these are not always as effective,



“SHODEN IS THE PIONEER OF DATA DE-DUPLICATION TECHNOLOGIES IN SA.”

ADRIAN WOOD

as this architecture still relied on tape offloads.

“Aside from the sheer amount of data to be backed up, there is the issue of the high cost of utilising this method. Disk-based backup requires enormous bandwidth, which is expensive. For this reason, it became necessary to find an innovative technology to address these issues.

“Capacity-optimised storage uses data de-duplication technology as a means of improving business efficiency and reducing the risk of losing one’s data. Shoden has been the pioneer of data de-duplication technologies in SA through our partnership with Data Domain, and our organisation has already introduced this technology into a number of our larger customers’ data centres,” he says.

However, Wood points out that many customers also have another backup requirement, which presents a whole new range of problems. He says large organisations are finding that a lot of their important information is being created and stored at regional offices or satellite sites, and backing this up can prove to be tricky.

“Remote sites present a different challenge. In these remote sites there is often a lack of skilled personnel, meaning that the task of backing up is either overlooked completely or badly done. To this end, we found we needed to provide a technology that is simple and easy to install and operate, while still delivering advantages such as encryption and data de-duplication.”

REMOTE SITE BACKUP

Wood says that among the problems faced by remote sites are those of slow network bandwidth, shrinking backup windows, multiple operating systems and applications on multiple sites.

“For this reason, Shoden offers its QuickVault solution, which is designed to address these challenges by improving remote site backups with a secure, reliable and predictable data protection cloud backup model. QuickVault is an integrated solution comprising hardware, software and the encompassing support services, similar in concept to our QuickRecover solution for mainframe,” he says.

“It surpasses legacy backup and recovery solutions, as it does not require agents to be installed onto the host servers. This negates the problem of agent management, which can be extremely complex due to different operating systems, revision levels and constant upgrade requirements.”

According to Wood, QuickVault utilises a disk-based architecture and includes high availability, data compression, data de-duplication, encryption, replication and data life cycle management among its features. By using cloud-based capabilities, he says, QuickVault reduces remote site backup complexity and delivers a simple, efficient, scalable solution managed and housed within the data centre.

UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES

“For Shoden, the key is to understand the challenges our customers face, and then to identify appropriate technologies to solve these problems. Our core differentiator here is the fact that we can also provide the full service support capabilities for any solution we may implement. In addition, we deliver both hardware and software support, and are prepared to take 100 percent responsibility for resolving customers’ problems and optimising our solutions,” he says.

“With Shoden having introduced de-duplication technology into the country, we have clearly developed a huge amount of intellectual property around data protection. This means our customers have the best possible levels of experience and skills on which to draw.”

Wood states that true data protection is about ensuring that multiple copies of the data are available at all times. As the requirement for the storage of data escalates, so de-duplication technology will become ever more crucial in respect of the management, protection and storage of large volumes of data. “We aim to simplify the entire data protection environment, with the goal of ensuring that fewer resources are required to manage the ever-increasing amount of data in an organisation.

“Our approach is to assist our customers to better understand the importance of their data. By this I mean that they need to be aware of what data is vital and needs to be protected, and how they can utilise the different technologies we offer to protect this crucial information.

“This is really what we do best. After all, our knowledge of data protection solutions and technologies, coupled with superior onsite service, support and consultancy offerings places us at the pinnacle of the data protection, backup and recovery market. Thus our customers can feel secure in the knowledge that they have the best people on the job, all the time,” concludes Wood. **B**