



Case Study 05

Insight implement Veritas Backup
Exec to standardise UK-wide data
back up

www.insight.com/uk

Insight®

PROJECT SUMMARY

Requirement

Insight required a standardised back-up solution across three UK office sites that offered easy administration for the systems department whilst ensuring business continuity and data portability in the event of a disaster. The chosen solution would replace a number of disparate, legacy solutions that had been implemented across the three sites over a five year period of business growth.

Solution

After a thorough investigation of the numerous offerings Insight selected Veritas Backup Exec as the system of choice. Not only did the solution best fit Insight's requirements, an earlier version was already deployed at Insight's Sheffield head office. The new version offered a familiar, but evolved, interface and back up methodology that would ease the learning curve for Insight's systems team ensuring this resource would not experience the increased 'down time' associated with new solutions implementations.

Insight implement Veritas Backup Exec to standardise UK-wide data back up

Insight UK runs three office locations housing in excess of 600 employees. The existing IT infrastructure supports up to 50,000 orders per month and annual transactions to value of £250m with over 80,000 customers.

A regular review highlighted the fact that there were compatibility issues with some of the backups Insight were doing. The solution in the London office was dependent upon a now retired, and hence unsupported, version of a Veritas Enterprise backup solution. The solution was running on Solaris, a platform the internal support team had minimal experience working with.

Peter Martin, Vice President of Systems at Insight UK explains, 'consolidation of Insight's IT estate has been the key focus for the current systems team. Insight has experienced growth both organically and through acquisition, it is the acquisition of organisations that created disparity within Insight's systems. Of course, it would be foolish to move into an acquired company and force your systems upon them with immediate effect. As such our approach has been considered, avoided unnecessary costs and project managed to meet the expectation of the UK and US executive team.'

The differing solutions created an environment where portability of data would prove to be an issue in the event of a disaster at any of Insight's UK locations. 'In essence they were non-compatible' explains Kasia Todd, IT Manager 'should Insight find themselves in a situation whereby our Manchester office went down, we would have had certain configuration difficulties in making our last Manchester back-up restore on the Sheffield system, though it could have been done.'

The initial project phase addressed the differing solutions available on the market and a thorough evaluation of functionality, product roadmaps, projected costs for licensing, support and any additional hardware that may be required. The evaluation combined in-house research with independent research from leading IT research organisations. The creation of a shortlist was followed by Insight rigorously testing evaluation copies of three vendors' solutions.

It was not just the initial purchase price that would eventually drive the technical decision; Peter Martin outlines 'this is a long term investment for Insight. Any investment that will become an intrinsic part of your organisations systems needs to be future-proof and offer continuing support. The provision of product roadmaps ensured Insight had visibility of the development plan for each solution. This



The project represented a smooth transition for Insight from splintered legacy systems to a standardised platform with a credible technical and commercial justification for the investment.

PETER MARTIN
SYSTEMS DIRECTOR
INSIGHT UK



is key, as earlier versions of any software solution inevitably have support phased out by the vendor.'

The ideal backup solution would be able to handle the different requirements of each site. Insight's Manchester facility holds only 30 employees whilst Sheffield and London hold approximately 300 employees each. 'Scalability is an over-used phrase in the world of IT. However if there is a context in which to use it this is a prime example. A back-up solution for a 30 user site and a back up solution for a 300 user site are two different propositions. Contrary to most sales pitches where solutions are sold to scale-up with your organisation, Insight needed a solution that could also cost effectively scale down' explains Peter.

The solutions also needed to, where possible, utilise existing backup media devices, DLT drives and tape library and have agents available for MS Windows, Linux, MS Exchange.

The conclusion of the research phase of the project was that Veritas Backup Exec would be the solution of choice. Kasia details 'the outcome of my team's research provided a compelling technical and commercial business case for the use of the Veritas. Not only did it meet our technical requirements and utilise existing hardware but we were running a now defunct version of the solution in one of our offices. The implications of this were that the Systems team already had a level of familiarity with the Veritas interface, albeit dated, that would ease the learning curve and implementation.'

Backup Exec was suitable for small environments such as Manchester, but scaled well to multiple tape drive backups that were required for London and Sheffield. An additional benefit was the ability to perform not just wholesale restores, but for example, individual exchange mailbox restores on the new version utilising the exchange agents.

This alone reduced the administrative overhead and time required to restore exchange mailboxes, making the IT support team more responsive to one of the most frequent type restore requests.

In implementing the same solution UK-wide, the backup media became instantly portable between sites. This simplified planning for business continuity, with each site being able to restore directly from tapes originated elsewhere, rather than having to re-create the remote backup solution locally before restores of required data could take place.

Implementing Backup Exec resulted in lower support costs, better responsiveness from the IT team and a standardised solution that enables IT staff at any site to work on behalf of each other. The project has ensured Insight's business continuity and disaster recover contingencies are now more reliable than ever and consolidated across a single solutions platform.

Peter concludes 'the project represented a smooth transition for Insight from splintered legacy systems to a standardised platform with a credible technical and commercial business justification for the investment.'