"Installation was very easy. Vision installed it remotely in only two sessions. Overall, it was just a matter of maybe four hours. And Vision was there with us all the way."
— Jerome Krehbiel, Project Analyst

Business Profile

Company Name:
IMA Financial Group, Inc.

Headquarters:
Wichita, Kansas, USA

Industry:
Insurance

Business Environment:
• Diversified financial services firm
• Employees: 500
• Revenue: More than $100-million
• Employee-owned company

Implementation Team:
Vision Solutions and IMA Financial

Critical Issue

Information is essential to IMA Financial Group's business. Losing access to any of its critical data or to its core business applications for an extended period would be unacceptable. The company needs a disaster recovery (DR) solution that protects its applications and all of its data, and allows for rapid recovery should a disaster strike.

Results

• Automatically protects all data
• Rapid recovery when necessary
• Quick and easy installation
• Provides peace of mind

Technologies

Software:
• Double-Take RecoverNow for AIX
• Sagitta (Vertafore)
• AIX

Hardware:
• IBM Power 720 (production)
• IBM pSeries 630 (backup)

Business Challenge

For many people, the mention of Kansas brings back childhood memories of a famous line spoken by Dorothy in the film *The Wizard of Oz* after a tornado blew her and her dog, Toto, to Oz. "Toto, I have a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore," said Dorothy.

It's not surprising that *The Wizard of Oz* was set in Kansas. That state, which is also the location of IMA Financial Group's primary data center, is right in the middle of tornado alley. Protecting data and applications from the threat of lengthy downtime due to a tornado or any other disaster is, therefore, an important objective for IMA.

With that in mind, in 2012 IMA began a major push to adopt a more robust and complete DR solution for its primary business application, the Sagitta agency management system, from Vertafore, and the data underlying it.

The challenge was to find an affordable DR solution that would backup all of the company's data, including data added or updated after the last nightly backup tape was created, and allow for easy and rapid recovery of the Sagitta application and its data.

Solution

The DR solution that IMA Financial adopted was Double-Take RecoverNow for AIX, from Vision Solutions. Double-Take RecoverNow couples real-time replication with true continuous data protection (CDP) technology. The software transparently captures changes made to a production server and copies them in near real-time to a backup server to protect all of an organization's data. In addition, it allows nearly instantaneous recovery of data from any point in time at the push of a button.

IMA implemented the solution without incurring additional hardware costs for the backup server. The company recently upgraded to an IBM Power 720 server and, rather than discarding its old IBM pSeries server, it used that server as the backup.

Installation was fast and easy. Vision helped install the software remotely. After two remote sessions, totaling only about four hours, the solution was ready to begin replicating.

When IMA installed Double-Take RecoverNow, the primary and backup servers were both in the company's primary data center in Wichita, Kansas. Once installed, the software replicated the production environment to the backup server. The backup server was then driven to the company's office in Denver, Colorado and installed it in a rack there. When a connection was initiated between the primary and backup systems, Double-Take RecoverNow automatically resynchronized the two servers.

IMA has tested the solution and found that a failover would take only a minute or so. After a disaster, IMA would choose to spend additional time ensuring that the backup server was complete and ready to run before turning the application over to users, but the company would still be able to resume operations very quickly.

According to Jerome Krehbiel, a project analyst at IMA, the biggest benefit that IMA receives from Double-Take RecoverNow is that, "We have peace of mind knowing that if our Wichita office were to be affected by a major disaster, our data is secure in Denver in a near real-time state and ready to go."

Another benefit is that, in the future, IMA could decide to no longer perform daily tape-based backups because it is confident that the Sagitta application, and all of its data, is fully protected by Double-Take RecoverNow.

Krehbiel also praised the simplicity of the solution. "Vision made the entire process very easy—from sales to installation—assigning a top-notch technician who had installed it on AIX many times before. And, from a support and service standpoint, Vision has been excellent."

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